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A
SYSTEM
OF
MORAL PHILOSOPHY;
OR,
CHRISTIAN ETHICS:

DESIGNED FOR THE USE OF
PARENTS IN THEIR DOMESTIC INSTRUCTION, ADVANCED CLASSES
IN SUNDAY SCHOOLS, AND LITERARY INSTITUTES.

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“May the doctrine of morality become a science.”—*Spurzheim.*

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P R E F A C E .

EDUCATION, in the proper meaning of the term, implies that system of training, whether public or otherwise, which elicits and improves the capabilities of human nature ; which calls into exercise, and puts under proper discipline, the intellectual, moral, and animal faculties of man, preparing him for the effective and graceful accomplishment of the several duties, which, in the order of divine Providence, may be incumbent on him to perform. Any thing less than this, however brilliant in its nature or results, falls short of an adequate and finished education.

The importance of a full development of the resources of human nature, and the subjection of those resources to the government of reason and revelation, though not sufficiently appreciated by any, is, in some degree, admitted by all. The native wildness of our intellectual and moral faculties; the many circumstances with which we are connected tending to the perversion of those functions; the contempt inevitably excited by the non-accomplishment of our duties; and the dreadful result of this delinquency, demonstrate the importance of education to be superior to that of any other human acquirement. The difference between a diamond just extracted from its bed, and one which has undergone the polishing manipulations of the lapidary; or between the aspects of a temporary cabin, and a lofty, well proportioned, and magnificent edifice, is only faintly illustrative of that dissimilarity which exists between the individual who is thoroughly improved by education, and the one who is not. This difference is prominent in every country; but in none is it more so than it is in our own. In consequence of the free-

dom and liberality of our government opening to every individual posts of responsibility and honour, the want of education is often rendered painfully conspicuous in those who are called to occupy them. A more unpleasant situation can scarcely be imagined than that of one who is unable to fill respectably the sphere of life in which circumstances may have placed him. Repeated failures having closed the prospect of success, he retires to his wonted obscurity with mortification and despair; wasting his time in unavailing lamentation over deficiencies which mental and moral culture would have abundantly supplied. The cultivated taste of the present age, and the high standard it has formed of intellectual and moral improvement, have determined that while an unobstructed career of usefulness and glory shall be opened to the learned and the good, that those who are destitute of principle and acquirement shall be "hewers of wood and drawers of water." Not to dwell upon the rich and peculiar enjoyments of the well educated mind; its repasts on eloquence, poetry, and the fine arts; its delightful visions in the sunshine of science and revelation, it is evident that education is important even in the ordinary concerns of life.

And if it is important in any country, it is peculiarly so in our own. In this extensive and extending sovereignty, we have, at the present moment, upwards of fifteen millions of human beings; and this population, less restrained than the ocean's wave, is continually rolling on, and pressing with resistless force upon its mountain barriers. In the lapse of a few years, the nameless wilds, stretching from the Mississippi across the stony ridge to the shores of the Pacific, will be densely inhabited. And when we add to this mass of human beings, the myriads that are springing up in the fertile vallies of the Missouri, the Illinois, the Ohio, and the other inlets to the "father of waters," we shall have a countless host. And as this population will select the rulers of our

common country, upon their acquirements will depend the perpetuation of its blessings, or the extinction of its hopes. If the happy government under which we have long prospered be transmitted to future generations, this will be accomplished only by the selection of such statesmen as, rising above the narrow views and selfish motives of ignorant and wicked aspirants, will call to their aid the light of science, and the maxims of christian morals. The moment these auxiliaries are laid aside, darkness and chaos will come again; the fair fabric of our government will be overturned, and there will be none to lift it from its fall.

That moral culture, in the training of human beings, ought to be an object of primary and solicitous attention, is too plain to be denied. The adaptations and capacities of the youthful mind; its quick susceptibilities of moral and religious truth, and the highest interests of the social state, all declare, in language not to be misunderstood, the duty of parents in this respect. So clear is the voice of reason in regard to the improvement of the moral powers, that all nations have bowed to her decision. History presents on every page the solemn and admonitory fact, that a recklessness of moral culture is productive of the most unhappy results. Be the power and wealth of nations, or individuals, what they may, if they are destitute of moral principles, they will be fruitful sources of human wretchedness. The commandment, "to do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God," is so congenial with the public interest, that nature seems to abhor, and stamp with maledictions all who disregard it. The most splendid and fascinating acquirements, when substituted for morality, will be only coverings of gossamer, heightening, by way of contrast, the internal deformities of character.

While moral principles are essential to the happiness and dignity of individuals, the quietude and comfort of families, and the prosperity of nations, there is but little difficulty in

imparting, even to the tender youth, some knowledge of their nature and excellence. Their susceptibility, in this respect, is such, that in the very cradle the goodness of the Supreme Governor, the character of his requirements, and the happy results of complying with them, may, in some measure, be explained. Often have we seen the tender infant, bowing before his heavenly Father, and heard him lisp, in accents of humility, prayers to the Giver of all Good; and witnessed, in consistency with these devotions, a high regard to christian morals. Nor are the sentiments imparted to the youthful mind apt to become inoperative in hoary age. "Train up a child," saith the wise man, "in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."

But the importance of early training, in moral principle, is not confined to the duration of the present life, but will increase, interminably, in that which is to come. The destiny—the eternal destiny of moral agents intimately depends upon impressions first fixed upon their minds. From the constitution of human nature, early associations are, in the highest degree, potential in after life. "Man," says archdeacon Paley, "is a bundle of habits." His actions, when traced to their primal source, are found to proceed much oftener from early associations than any other cause. It is therefore not surprising that children, matured in vicious habits, and without countervailing principles, should continue in a wicked course, not only up to manhood, but even until death.

If parents would see their children prosper in the present life; would have them close their earthly career under the blessings of their country and their God, and finally enjoy that felicity which awaits the just in another world, they should bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; should impress upon their tender minds that to "fear God, and to keep his commandments," is the whole duty and happiness of man. The susceptibility of the youthful mind

—the activity of the principle of association—the force of habit—and the word of God; all concur in the declaration that this ought to mingle with the first, the last, and the intermediate parts of education.

To assist in providing the youthful mind with sound and salutary principles, and to induce in it habits of moral rectitude, we commenced and prosecuted the following work. One of the most impulsive wishes of our heart, from early youth, has been to contribute to the improvement of the rising generation; and now that we are descending the vale of life, not knowing how soon we may be summoned to another world, we are solicitous to perpetuate our former efforts in the present form. And should we, before we go hence, and are no more seen on earth, or after we have passed that “bourne from which no traveller returns,” discover beneficial results from our feeble labours, we shall be amply remunerated for the many toilsome and often thankless efforts we have made to be useful in our day and generation. While the inadequate, and not unfrequently reluctant compensation which public teachers receive for their exhausting labours naturally tends to repress their zeal and to limit their enterprize, we have sought to reanimate our efforts by contemplating their results in another world. Much as we value the acquirements of human learning, and ardently as we wish to contribute to our country’s glory, by promoting the intellectual improvement of her children, we are infinitely more solicitous to assist in the diffusion of sound morals and evangelical piety. Nature, and the god of nature, have decreed that, in the want of these attainments, no one can be happy in the life which now is, or in that which is to come.

With this view, we hope that no apology is requisite for offering to the public a new family and school book on moral philosophy. The almost entire absence of moral teaching in our common literary institutes; the alarming prevalence of popish principles; and the increasing dereliction of order

and subordination in our fellow citizens, call upon every christian and patriot to effect, if possible, a reformation in the present system of public instruction. Until this great and eventful object is accomplished we may expect to witness a continued progression in moral turpitude. To dry up the streams of vice we should commence our labours at the fountain head. The improvement of the hearts and minds of the rising generation ought to be the object of our primary and continued effort; and until this is the case, all attempts at reform will be partial and comparatively nugatory.

In the present work we have not attempted to build up our own reputation at the expense of our predecessors; but simply to supply a desideratum, which, as far as we know, has never been attempted before. The learned and justly celebrated writers on moral science, both in ancient and modern times, have addressed their labours to the literati, or to men of mature minds. None of them has condescended to adapt his productions to the domestic circle and initiatory school;—and yet these are the very points to which our greatest efforts should be directed.

To aid the parent and the teacher in the important business of moral culture is the only design of the present volume. Whether we shall succeed in the accomplishment of our object is yet, of course, to be decided. We are assured, however, that in as far as we have succeeded in the exhibition of divine truth, we may safely anticipate a blessing on our labours. —“My word,” saith God, “that goeth forth out of my mouth, shall not return to me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.”

This outline is not conducted upon the narrow principles of sectarian views, but upon the broad ground of reason and revelation. It aims simply at the exhibition of human duties, as deduced by the light of nature and the holy scriptures. Having taken our stand upon this holy summit, we were de-

terminated not to "confer with flesh and blood," but to proceed, under the guidance of those lights, whithersoever they might lead us. Aware of our high responsibility; we have discarded, as much as possible, the perverting influence of human dogmas, and endeavoured, in the fear of God, to state the truth just as we found it in the oracles of nature and grace.

In the execution of our plan we have aimed chiefly at perspicuity, conciseness, and accuracy. Intending the work not so much for amusement as study, we have preferred brevity, even at the expense of elegance. A book, written in a full and flowing style, we have found, by observation and experience, not to be adapted to the capacity of children. However much it may be preferred by the general reader, it soon becomes fatiguing to the student, especially if he is obliged to commit the greater portion of it to memory. The parlour and the school room demand no less difference in the character of their books, than they do in their furniture. While the latter requires simplicity and conciseness, the former demands elegance and amplitude. And not forgetting the capacities of those for whom the work is particularly designed, we have been anxious to make it perspicuous. Positions which required hours and days to elaborate, are stated, it is hoped, with a clearness that even children may comprehend. The perspicuity, however, consists not so much in abundance of illustration, or juvenile phraseology, as in elementary statement. There has been no effort to avoid difficulties, or to conceal ignorance; but a wish, in every instance, to go to the bottom of moral science, and render distinct the most entangled and complicated subjects. Though the vast and various topics of christian ethics are here presented in a small compass, and in simple language, we have endeavoured to discuss as thoroughly every important point as we deemed suitable to the condition of our readers. But feeling as we did our awful responsibility in every line we wrote, we were

especially anxious our statements and deductions should be correct. We, undoubtedly, have fallen into errors; but we have studiously endeavoured to avoid them. Throwing ourselves upon our own resources, and relying entirely upon the holy scriptures, and the assistance of that grace, without which, "nothing is strong, nothing is holy," we have endeavoured to state the truth, and nothing but the truth.

To the plan of incorporating theology with ethics, we have no doubt objections will be raised; but believing that christian principles are the only stimulus to moral action, and that the interests of truth should not be sacrificed to classification, we felt obliged to pursue the course we have taken. Whatever may be the distinctness of nature's light, or that of the holy scriptures, inasmuch as God has given both for our instruction, neither ought to be excluded. Our design, in the present essay, being the statement and enforcement of human duties, we availed ourselves of scripture as well as reason. An exclusion of the word of God from any system of moral action cannot fail to be injurious. It will not only present a body without a soul; but a body without either form or comeliness.

The work is divided into three books. The first treats of the nature of obligation, and the lights by which it is discovered. These lights arising from the works and the word of God, are discussed at some length. Being the basis on which the superstructure rests, we were solicitous to present it with as much clearness as possible. The proofs of the inspiration of the scriptures, though not usually embraced in works of this kind, were deemed essential to the present plan. Every system of morals resting upon the word of God, and designed for the perusal of younger students, ought to present the grounds upon which that word is received. To pupils of this description every position should be proved; nothing should be taken for granted. The evidences, however, are compressed within a narrow compass, and are intended

merely as a step-stone to the study of other works of the same kind.

The second book treats of the adaptations and relations of human beings; because it is believed that, in every instance, obligations arise from this source. But this division of the work, like the one immediately preceding it, being merely preparatory to the chief discussion, is dispatched with great brevity. As we did not intend to write on mental, but moral philosophy, we considered a lengthened and subtile disquisition on the former neither necessary nor proper. We wished to shew the design of God in the creation of man as evinced in his adaptations, and this being done our object was accomplished.

The third and last book treats of the duties we owe to God, to our fellow creatures, and to ourselves. These duties, we think, are clearly deduced from the light of nature and the holy scriptures, and cannot fail to recommend themselves to every candid and considerate mind. All that authority can render awful, virtue lovely, and happiness desirable; enter into the composition of the motives which urge the performance of these duties. The eternal and irrevocable decree of God, that it shall go well with the righteous, for he shall eat the fruit of his doing; and that it shall go ill with the wicked, for the reward of his hands shall be given him, is continually held forth and dwelt upon. And the certainty of this result is shewn, not only from the declaration of holy writ, but also from the economy of nature. Man, like every thing in the universe, has prescribed for him a certain orbit; and a divergency from that orbit is shewn to be productive of mischief and confusion. From this arrangement there is no appeal. It forms the grand nucleus around which the universe is built. It enters into the essential composition of man, and can no more be suspended than his being. "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land; but if ye refuse, and rebel, ye shall be

devoured with the sword," is a law, written not only upon the pages of inspiration, but upon every particle of nature. Sin, in every instance, is armed with its own dagger, and will infallibly inflict its own punishment. The transgression of the law of God is a derangement of nature, and suffering is the inevitable consequence of that derangement.

Whatever may be the merit or demerit of the present work, it was intended for the promotion of the best interests of man; even his temporal and eternal happiness. A synopsis of it was delivered, in the form of lectures, to pupils in the Western Female Collegiate Institute; and having been requested by them, and others, to give it to the public in a more extended form, we have yielded to their request. And this we do, most humbly beseeching the Fountain of all Good to render it a lasting blessing to all who study it.

Erin Hill, near Pittsburgh,

May, 1835.

A SYSTEM OF MORAL PHILOSOPHY,

OR

CHRISTIAN ETHICS.

BOOK I.

Of the nature and basis of human obligations, and the means by which they are deduced.

1. Moral philosophy, or christian ethics, is that science which treats of the nature and extent of human obligations. It properly embraces the duties which we owe to God, to our fellow creatures, and to ourselves.

2. Human obligations are *reasons* for the performance of certain actions, and grow out of the relations which subsist between actors, and the objects of their actions. We, for instance, are under obligations to be grateful to our benefactors; because we stand to them in the relation of beneficiaries; and it is reasonable for those who receive favours to be thankful to the individuals who bestow them. Obligations and reasons in this sense are synonymous. Every action we are bound to perform involves reasons for its accomplishment, and these reasons are the obligations we are under to perform it. We are obliged to do a thing because it is reasonable. In the whole range of christian ethics, there is no obligation without reason. In every instance the former implies the latter, both in essence and degree. Be the power

1. What is moral philosophy?
2. What are human obligations?

and sovereignty of the supreme being what they may, they are perfectly coincident with reason. Upon this principle his government is entirely founded. Being infinitely *good*, he requires of his creatures nothing but what is infinitely *proper*.

3. The *ground* upon which the reasons for human duties rest, has been defined utility—the customs and laws of the country in which we live—the dictates of innate moral principles—the nature and fitness of things—and the sovereignty of God. But, perhaps, a better definition is, *The will of God founded upon the adaptations and relations of his creatures*.

4. God being the creator, sustainer, and governor of all things, his will is necessarily the supreme law of the universe; and this will, being infinitely just, is necessarily in accordance with the capacities and relations of his creatures. Every creature is required to act agreeably to the constitution of his nature. In the great scale of creation, extending from the highest seraph, down to inorganic matter, the duty of every individual is graduated in exact accordance with his ability. This doctrine is beautifully illustrated in the parable of the talents. One individual, we are told, received five talents, another two, and another one; and each one was required to improve according to his several ability.* The will of God, concerning his creatures, being founded upon their nature and capacities, their obligations to comply with his requirements are entirely reasonable. Reason, according to the decrees of God, is the grand and fundamental law of the universe. “Come,” says he, “and let us *reason* together.”† “Are not my ways equal? are not your ways unequal?”‡

5. The will of God, in reference to human beings, is discoverable in two ways: First, by the *light of nature*; and, secondly, by the *holy scriptures*.

3. What is the ground of human obligations?

4. How is this proved?

5. How is the will of God discoverable?

* Mat. 25: 14—30, † Is. 1: 18. ‡ Ez. 18: 29.

6. The *light of nature* is that which indicates, by the adaptation of things, the will of their creator concerning them. As by the connexions of the movements of a time-piece, and the tendency of its whole construction, the design of its formation is pointed out; so, by the adaptation of creatures to certain purposes, the intention of their creator is manifested. The splendour, attraction, and position of the sun, indicate, beyond the possibility of doubt, the end for which he was created. And the adaptation of the atmosphere to the condition of our lungs, of certain kinds of food to our nourishment, of exercise and sleep to our health, of temperance, and of every other virtue to our happiness, points out, with equal certainty, the will of God concerning them. The design of the creation of every thing with which we are sufficiently acquainted, is manifest from its construction and habitudes. Were an inhabitant of another planet to descend to our earth in total ignorance of our duties, he might, after a competent survey of the adaptations and capacities of man, deduce, with great certainty, from these circumstances, many of his obligations. To deny that the nature and relations of human beings indicate their duty, is to impugn the wisdom and power of God; is to conclude he was not capable of forming his creatures in accordance with the objects of their creation. The light of nature, therefore, is intended by the parent of the universe, to assist in guiding us in the search of duty. Events, under the control of divine providence, lead to the same conclusion. Millions of human beings, in all ages, have been left with no other light for their direction; and this hardly could have been the fact, had this light been totally inefficient. But upon this subject we are not left merely to speculation. "The heavens," we are told, "declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handy work. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out throughout all the earth, and their words unto the

6. What is the light of nature?

end of the world.”* And we are assured that “the invisible things of God from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and godhead; so that they are without excuse.”† “For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves; which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another.”‡

7. But we are not left exclusively to the light of nature for the discovery of our duty. God has given another, and a fuller revelation for this important and interesting purpose. This revelation is contained in the holy scriptures. They are a complete and exact disclosure of the will of God concerning our duties. “The law of the Lord is *perfect*, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is *sure*, making wise the simple; the statutes of the Lord are *right*, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is *pure*, enlightening the eyes.”§

8. That the scriptures contain a revelation of the will of God concerning our duties, is, from numerous and conclusive arguments, not only *probable* but absolutely *certain*. A brief view of the substance of these arguments, we will submit in the present place.

ARGUMENT I.

9. God, in the nature of things, must have always had a will concerning man, and it is reasonable to believe that he would make it known—that if he did make it known, he would, in doing so, adopt the most eligible plan—and the

7. Is the light of nature our exclusive guide?

8. How is it evident that the scriptures contain a revelation of the will of God?

9. What is the substance of the first argument?

* Ps. 19. † Rom. 1: 20, ‡ Rom. 2: 14, 15. § Ps. 19: 7, 8.

scriptures being the most eligible plan, the conclusion is, that plan has been adopted.

1. That God has always had a will concerning man, is evident from the fact that he *created* him. We did not create ourselves. Self-creation supposes an effect before its cause; an agent to create before the agent existed; or, in other words, that nothing created something, which is absurd. Nor could we be independently created by any other creature. Every creature is entirely dependent on his own creator for what he is; and, therefore, can be only the *instrumental*, not the *efficient* cause of creation. The ultimate and efficient cause of creation, in every instance, must be self-existent and eternal; and consequently God.

He also is our *preserver*. Secondary agents may, indeed, have been concerned in our preservation; but these agents must all have been dependent on their primary cause; and this cause was God. To him, therefore, our preservation is properly attributable. If D depend on C for certain privileges, and C on B, and B on A, it is evident they *all* are dependent on A. He being the primary source of their immunities, on him they are alike dependent for their continuance.

God also, in the various dispensations of his government, has evinced a desire for the promotion of human happiness. The adaptation of the universe to man, and of man to the universe, and the many gratifications resulting from this arrangement, prove incontrovertibly, that God takes a permanent and lively interest in the welfare of human beings.

The inference then is, that God has a will concerning us; for in the absence of such a will, he could not have created, preserved, and cherished us, as he evidently has done.

2. If God has a will concerning man, it is reasonable to believe he would make it known. If he should not make it known, how could man become acquainted with it? And if he does not become acquainted with it, how can he comply

1. How do you prove the first proposition?

2. Why is it reasonable to believe that God would reveal his will?

with its requirements? Nothing would fix a fouler blot upon a human legislator, than to enact laws, in reference to his subjects, and then abstain from the publication of those laws. A law is a rule of action; but a voluntary conformity with any law, without a knowledge of its provisions, is impossible. The conclusion then is, that God, entertaining a will concerning human beings, would not abstain from its publication. Every attribute of the divine character, and every mental faculty of man, is a proof that such a course of conduct could not be adopted.

3. If, however, God reveal his will to human creatures, it will be because he is desirous of doing so; and being desirous of doing so, he will *wish* to do it in the *best* way; and being *competent* to do it in the best way, he accordingly *will* do it in that way.

4. But the only possible plans, of which we have any knowledge, for the revelation of the will of God to man, are the constant interposition of miracles—the perpetual and resistless influence of his holy spirit—the light of nature—and the one adopted in the scriptures. Of these plans the latter is manifestly the *best*.

5. The constant interposition of miracles would either operate so powerful as to supersede the freedom of the will, and thus subvert an important and fundamental principle of our nature; or they would, by the frequency of their occurrence, cease in time to be efficacious. Nor can we overlook the inconvenience they would occasion by breaking in upon the present beautiful order and harmony of nature. That which is now permanent and stable, would, in the perpetual occurrence of miracles, be for ever changing. Occasional miracles, may, indeed, be instrumental of doing good; but a constant interference with the course of nature, could not fail to be productive of universal mischief.

3. Why will God reveal his will in the best way?

4. Which are the only possible plans of a revelation?

5. What are the objections to the plan of miracles?

6. The perpetual and resistless influence of the holy spirit would be nearly, if not quite, as ineligible as that of the constant interposition of miracles. It would not only contravene the free agency of man, but tend directly to weaken his social ties. The beautiful system of dependence and responsibility, which now obtains in the moral world, would, in this arrangement, be nearly annihilated. Every individual would be independent of his fellows in regard to his own conduct; and acquiring a knowledge of his duty without the labour of investigating it, would contribute nothing on this subject to the general knowledge. All that mental effort; that intellectual discipline, which, in the present order of things, contribute so much to human glory and social happiness, would be rendered useless, in regard to moral science, by the constant and resistless operation of the holy spirit, in the immediate revelation of our duty.

7. The light of nature is too feeble and remote for general use. A few philosophers only, after long and incessant labour, have been able to discover it; and its exact boundaries and efficiency, up to the present day, have never been defined. Perceptions of the adaptations of nature, depending upon deep learning, a sound judgment, and the accuracy of long and critical observation, are immeasurably beyond the attainment of ordinary minds. Of all the philosophers, both of ancient and modern times, no one, as yet, has been able to deduce from the adaptations of nature, an unexceptional system of moral duties. Though the gigantic minds of Plato, Seneca, and Confucius, were put in requisition to accomplish this desideratum, they confessedly failed in their undertaking. System after system has followed in the lapse of time; but every one has proved to be erroneous or defective.

8. Nor is the light of nature, could we obtain it, in its best condition, adequate to our wants. It affords, in regard to

6. What to the resistless influence of the spirit?

7. What to the light of nature?

8. What other objection is there to the light of nature?

many subjects, in which we are deeply interested, no information. The dark clouds, which rest upon the grave, are absolutely impervious to its brightest beam. On the brow of that eternal night, which lies beyond the tomb, it never sheds even a wandering or solitary ray. And even where it does instruct, its instructions are too tardy for human wants. Instead of affording light in the wild and reckless periods of youth, when it is most needed, it reserves its scintillations for mature age, and chastened feelings. Nor does it then exhibit sanctions sufficiently powerful to induce obedience. If it points out the path in which we should go, it leaves us without motives to walk in it. Like the moonbeams of a winter night, it may, indeed, dispel darkness; but it lacks the inspirations of invigorating warmth and impulsive action.

9. But the inspiration of the holy scriptures is fully adequate to our wants—it is easy to be understood—is so mild as not to infringe upon the free agency of man—and yet affords sufficient sanctions to induce obedience in every candid and considerate mind.

1. The revelation of God's will by the holy scriptures, being superior to any other plan, the conclusion is, this plan has been adopted.

ARGUMENT II.

2 That the scriptures are a revelation from God, is highly probable from their wonderful adaptation to the interests of human beings. There is, in this respect, a perfect coincidence in the systems of revelation and providence. They both, in all their ramifications, like the radii of the same circle, tend to one point; and that point is the production of the greatest amount of human happiness.

3. The morality of the holy scriptures is not only pure, but

9. In what respects is the scripture plan of revelation the best?

1. What conclusion follows from the superiority of the scripture plan?

2. What is the second argument?

3. What is the first argument to prove this proposition?

entirely benign. While it enjoins an abstinence from “adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murder, drunkenness, revellings, and such like,” it requires the cultivation of “love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance.”* Nor will a compliance with this injunction less certainly contribute to human happiness, than that matter, under the influence of gravity, will tend to the centre. Wherever the principles of christian ethics have been acted on, prosperity and general happiness have been the result. Adapted to the nature, capacities, and relations of human beings, as these principles evidently are, they can no more be disregarded with impunity than the natural cravings of our appetites. The irrevocable decree of nature is, that a conformity with the precepts of christianity *shall* be conducive to human happiness; and that a rejection of them *shall* be productive of human misery. The morality of the holy scriptures, is so far from being an arbitrary requirement, growing out of the caprice or despotism of the Almighty, that it is a code of laws, necessarily arising from the nature, capacities, and relations of man. The more philosophically this subject is investigated, the more evidently accurate the statement will appear. In view of human nature, as constituted by the author of all things, the production of general happiness, by the practice of scripture morality, appears no less natural than the elimination of heat by the action of caloric.

4. Nor are the *doctrines* of the Bible less efficient in the production of human happiness, than are its precepts. They indeed, are the basis of our sweetest hopes; the sources of our purest comfort; and the motives to our highest virtues. The infinite perfections of the godhead—the benignity and uni-

4. What is the second argument to prove this proposition?

* Gal. 5: 19—23.

versality of his providence—the redemption of mankind by the transactions of the cross—the gift of the holy spirit—the immortality of the soul—and the doctrines of rewards and punishments—are adapted to the production of the sweetest, highest, and most enduring happiness. They bind up the broken heart, revive the depressed spirit, reconcile the murmuring and discontented mind, and open beyond the grave, a cheering and delightful prospect.

5. And even the ordinances of christianity are salutary in their tendency. Adapted as they are by infinite wisdom to the exigencies of human nature, they are always, when properly attended to, productive of human comfort. There is not a more decided adaptation of the atmosphere to the condition of our lungs, than there is of the ordinances of christianity to the mental and moral functions of man. The christian sabbath—the church of the living God—baptism—and the Lord's supper, are obviously subservient to the best interests of our race.

6. The observance of the christian sabbath recruits the exhausted powers of the labouring portion of the community—affords facilities for mental and moral improvement—and creates incentives to personal decorum and social intercourse.

7. The effects of the christian church are the culture of the moral and religious virtues—the advancement of science and literature—and the promotion of general order and prosperity.

8. Baptism admits its subjects to the privileges of the christian church—is a constant memento of promises to live worthy of our christian calling—is a symbol of that inward purity, which, by our profession we are required to cultivate; and is a sacramental pledge, that God, upon the conditions of penitence and faith, will give us all the blessings that we need.

5. What is the third argument to prove this proposition ?
6. What are the benefits of observing the christian sabbath ?
7. What are the effects of the christian church ?
8. What are the benefits of baptism ?

9. The Lord's supper, when properly received, has a natural tendency to improve our social and religious feelings—to assure us of the pardon of past sins—and to inspire fresh and animating hopes of future happiness.

1. Coinciding as the scriptures do, with the design of God, as indicated in the works of nature, in promoting the happiness of human creatures, we cannot doubt their divine original. A system of religion, so multifarious in its details; so apparently casual in many of its important features; so artlessly advocated by individuals of different circumstances; and yet, so profoundly and accurately adapted to the wants of human beings; as the religion of the scriptures evidently is—must have received its origin from above. The infinitely accurate adaptation of christianity to the various, complicated, and often undeveloped principles and relations of our species, proves, with a demonstration not to be resisted, the infinite wisdom of the AUTHOR.

ARGUMENT III.

2. The candour of the sacred writers, as evinced in every portion of their compositions, affords another proof that they were the subjects of inspiration.

3. These writers appeared upon the stage of action, not as the champions of any particular school, or new and distinctive theory; but generally for the purpose of describing facts. This seems, on almost all occasions, to have been the primary object of their writing. Their polemic and didactic essays were short and incidental. Instead of exhibiting their doctrines, or even precepts as primary or leading objects, they gave them as circumstances called them out. The peculiarities of christianity are no where exhibited in a systematic and

9. What are the benefits of the Lord's supper?

1. What is the conclusion from the above premises?

2. What is the third argument?

3. What is the first proof of their candour?

consecutive form; but are scattered here and there, as occasion required.

4. Even in their descriptive pieces there is no apparent effort at effect. All they appear to have aimed at, was the relation of things just as they occurred. No pompous and swelling periods; no factitious pathos or gorgeous painting; no laboured arguments and anxious proofs, are found in their productions; but all of them are eminently characterized by naturalness and ease. Moses, in recording the deeply interesting process of creation, simply says: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth:" and speaking of the formation of light; "Let there be light and there was light." Nor did the writers of the New Testament, in a single instance, depart from this simplicity; but in recording the most extraordinary and splendid miracles, observed a brevity, peculiar and surprising. So artless and single minded were these writers, in the preparation of their respective narratives, that a thought of the possibility of contradicting one another seems never to have entered their minds. With the simplicity of little children, eager to relate something they had seen, they hastened, simply for the benefit of others, to make known the burden of their stories. Without meeting for the purpose of collating their unnatural and complicated statements, and thus preparing them for the scrutiny of the public eye, they rushed forward, and spontaneously related what they had seen. In consequence of pursuing this course, which candour and the love of truth only could have prompted, we discover, what must always result from proceedings of this description; a dissimilarity in some points of their narratives. This dissimilarity, however, never amounts to contradiction. It consists simply of omissions in some instances, and of a diversity of minuteness in others. And this precisely is what, from the construction of the human mind, must necessarily happen in the testimony of honest witnesses. In descriptions of events,

4. What is the second proof of their candour?

by different persons, relating only what they themselves had seen and felt, there will infallibly be a want of perfect sameness. This deficiency, however, instead of invalidating their testimony, will, in the estimation of candid and judicious judges, confirm it. Proving, as it does, the absence of collusion, and a disposition to deceive, it adds greatly to the weight of testimony.

5. Of the appearance of selfish and unholy motives, in any of the writers of the sacred scriptures, there is, in all their productions, a total absence. No envy, no malignity, no sinister feelings, is apparent in a single line they wrote. They recorded their own errors; their own infirmities; and their own punishments, in the same manner they recorded those of others; not in the language of hypocritical regret, but in a strain of unaffected simplicity and penitence. The Jews were represented as a hard-hearted and disobedient people; the disciples as foolish, and slow of understanding; and the apostles, as deserving, in many instances, animadversion and rebuke. There is not, in all their writings, a single trace of insincerity and collusion; of the slightest wish to seek for popularity at the expense of virtue; or of selfishness inclining them, in the least degree, to misrepresent facts, or distort truth. We discover, in all their writings, an independence, impartiality, and directness, which a consciousness of truth alone could have imparted.

6. So far from indicating a timidity under the process of arrest and examination, they, on all occasions, invited the strictest scrutiny of their statements. On their part there was no effort at concealment; no desire whatever to escape from examination; no air of mystery and reserve; but a plain, open, and straight forward declaration of all they believed and knew. Instead of abiding in lonely and unfrequented places; of practising their skill on ignorant and unsuspecting individuals; or of eluding the eye of penetration by changing, frequently, their place of residence; or of attempting to ac-

5. What is the third proof of their candour?

6. What is the fourth proof of their candour?

comply with their design by force or stratagem ; they went to the very temple ; appeared in the presence of the enraged sanhedrim ; proclaimed their doctrines before kings ; exhibited in the face of heaven, the most obnoxious features of their creed ; and were, on all occasions, as peaceful and artless as little lambs. Not alarmed by menace ; not deterred by persecution ; not diverted from their course by fear of punishment, they boldly appeared before their adversaries, and under sentence of death, and even in the agonies of martyrdom, proclaimed, without reserve, their morals and their faith.

7. Nor did they, under any circumstances, however trying, involve themselves in contradiction. Although they flourished at widely different periods ; were brought up in different countries, and under various governments ; possessed an infinite variety of talents and acquirements ; acted under hostile and conflicting circumstances ; and wrote, ostensibly, for the accomplishment of different objects, they harmonized in every instance, both in the exhibition of doctrines, and the statement of facts. Diversified as they were in almost every other particular, in these, they were perfectly consistent. Their facts and sentiments were all convergent to a single point, and that point was the moral government of God by the agency of Jesus Christ.

8. These writers, it is true, represented the divine government as presenting, in the long lapse of time, a variety of aspects ; but this representation involves, in no respect the shadow of a contradiction. The primeval, patriarchal, mosaical, and christian dispensations, are as evidently consistent with one another, and as probably emanated from the same source, as that the ever varying, and sometimes apparently contradictory productions of nature, came from the same hand. We not only observe in the history of the same people, alternations of prosperity and adversity ; but also in that of the same country, changes in the climate, the productions, the diseases, and almost

7. What is the fifth proof of their candour ?

8. What objection is here answered ?

every other circumstance ; but these changes, instead of indicating operations of contradictory agencies, are only the varied doings of the same God, for the accomplishment of the same object. Diversity without contradiction is evident in the whole economy of nature ; and why should it not obtain in the economy of grace ? In the revolutions of the heavenly bodies, all are changing, and yet all are in harmony. The variations of their relative positions ; of the centres of gravity ; of light and obscurity ; and of the action of the centrifugal and centripetal forces, are not only all produced by the same mind, but are in harmony with the same laws. Nor is there any reason why the same variety, comprehending the same harmony, should not exist in the moral government of God.

9. In view of the candour of the sacred writers, as evinced in the absence of all selfish zeal for the support of any particular school or party theory ; in their child-like simplicity in the description of facts ; in their unsophisticated expectations in regard to the reception of their stories ; in their uncompromising impartiality in speaking of themselves and others ; in their anxious desire to have their statements examined at the time, and in the place, which of all others, were the most likely to lead to their detection if they were not true ; and in the unvarying and superhuman consistency of their testimony, under the most dissimilar and contradictory circumstances—it is scarcely possible to disbelieve they were the subjects of inspiration. That the sacred writers were widely different from other writers is evident beyond controversy ; and we are driven to the necessity of believing they had reached the perfection of composition without labour, without instruction, and without human assistance ; or that they were aided by supernatural agency. And unquestionably the latter conclusion is the more reasonable.

9. What is the summing up of this argument ?

ARGUMENT IV.

1. The pure and elevated morality of the writers of the holy scriptures also corroborates their pretensions to inspiration.

2. But few men, upon the ground of moral excellence, possessed stronger claims to the admiration of posterity than the first of these sacred penmen. Born in a land of despotism; bred amid the luxuries of a gay and dissipated court; surrounded, from his earliest youth, with the deep clouds of ignorance and superstition; and prompted by the circumstances of his pupilage to the aspirations of royalty, it was natural for him to disregard the ties of consanguinity; and in the splendour of his fortune, to forget the miseries of his people. From the Egyptians he had much to hope; and from the Hebrews he had nothing. The former were a magnificent and powerful nation; and the latter had long been a degraded and enslaved people. But in spite of the weakness of human nature, he "refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season."* Renouncing the throne of Egypt, and relinquishing the treasures of a tributary world, he sought his comfort and his glory only in the emancipation and prosperity of a wretched and oppressed people. For them he provoked perils, endured sufferings, and performed prodigies of kindness. The annals of time, perhaps, furnish no instance of a protracted and disinterested devotion to a hard-hearted and disobedient people, equal to the history of Moses. From the commencement of his public life, till its termination by death, he was engaged, at the expense of his earthly comfort, in promoting the interest and glory of his people. For them he wrote his-

1. What is the fourth argument?

2. Which is the first instance to prove this position?

*Heb. 11 : 24, 25.

tory and composed poetry; formed a government and ordained laws; fought battles and won victories; and, what, perhaps, in his condition, was still more extraordinary, taught lessons of a pure morality, and exemplified those lessons in his own conduct. At the end of a long life, unremittingly devoted to the happiness of his people, he died without wealth, and without perpetuating his titles to his descendants; leaving an imperishable monument of profound wisdom, and disinterested benevolence. Long as a single vestige of Jewish history remains, Moses will be revered not only as a benefactor to his country, but also to the world.

3. Nor is the history of David, upon the score of moral excellence, less entitled to our notice. Owing to the rapid and trying changes through which he passed, his character, perhaps, was more developed, and shone, at times, with greater lustre than even that of Moses. Called in early life from the flocks of timid sheep, and the herds of gentle cattle, to the achievement of a victory, which decided the fate of nations, he had much to cherish pride and excite vanity; persecuted by his royal master for this very victory, and harassed by the rebellion and disobedience of his own sons, he was peculiarly obnoxious to a hatred of mankind; surrounded by predatory nations, and worried by reckless and ambitious subjects, he had strong motives to revenge and despotism; possessed with exquisite sensibility and surpassing genius, his nature prompted him to study and repose; thwarted, disappointed, and crushed by misfortunes to the dust, he was singularly liable to dejection and despair; and afflicted by the loss of friends and the death of relatives, he had strong temptations to impiety and recklessness;—but in spite of these, and of every obstruction to a calm and judicious course of action, he exhibited, with uniform lustre, the gentle and the generous virtues. Notwithstanding the ungrateful and provoking conduct of his subjects, he was pre-eminently pa-

3. Which is the second instance to prove this position?

triotic. His language, in reference to the very seat of disaffection and rebellion was, "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget its cunning. If I do not remember thee let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth." Nor was he less eminent for a passive and forgiving temper in the midst of domestic and local provocations; an unobtrusive and conciliating humility in the zenith of prosperity; a placid and unyielding firmness in the vortex of revolution; and a combination of lofty and pious feelings in the midst of temptations. Like the sun, emerging from the opacity of an interposing sphere, he always shone with increased brightness, after the temporary obscuration had passed away.

4. David, on one occasion, it is true, yielding to the infirmities of his nature, fixed upon his reputation a foul and revolting blot. Soon, however, his moral principles regained their former vigour, and he made all the reparation the circumstances of the case demanded. The royal sinner, instead of defending himself by the arm of power, instantly fell at his reprobator's feet, and confessed his fault. Regret for his former sins, and promises of future amendment, now marked the conduct of repentant David. And this, in the most decisive manner, proved the sincerity and firmness of his virtue. Nothing short of a deep and permanently seated morality, could have induced the offender, under the circumstances then existing, to have repented as he did. It was the voice of God, speaking to a conscience deeply imbued with virtue, that at once disarmed power, subdued pride, and excited penitence. Controlling, as David did, the whole resources of his kingdom, he would not have submitted to the chiding of a single man, had he not been governed by principles of virtue.

But not to confine our remarks to writers of the Old Testament, we will advert briefly to some of the New.

5. St. Paul, who was alike distinguished for his talents and

4. How is the objection to David's morality obviated?

5. Which is the third instance to prove this position?

acquirements, was brought up in strict conformity with the law of Moses; but having, on due reflection, embraced the christian religion, became one of its most able and zealous defenders. Prominent, however, as he was in those respects, he was still more distinguished for his moral excellence. The annals of human beings scarcely furnish a single instance of a brighter and sublimer constellation of virtues, shining in the character of one man, than was possessed by this individual. All that is lovely and conciliating in demeanour; noble and heroic in enterprize; lofty and pure in sentiment, entered into the composition of his conduct.

In the numerous and trying scenes through which he was conducted, he uniformly exhibited the greatest cheerfulness and amenity. "We are troubled," said he, "on every side, but not distressed; we are perplexed but not in despair; persecuted but not forsaken; cast down but not destroyed." When charged before his country's tribunals with crimes of the blackest dye, he repelled the accusation with a firmness, so attempered with meekness, that he conciliated even his incensed judges. In his defence before Agrippa, he opened in a strain of courtesy, equalled only by his eloquence. "I think myself happy, king Agrippa," said he, "because I shall answer for myself this day before thee, touching all the things whereof I am accused of the Jews; especially because I know thee to be expert in all the customs and questions which are among the Jews: wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently." And when interrupted by the exclamation of Festus, "Paul, thou art beside thyself, much learning doth make thee mad," he replied, "I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak forth the words of truth and soberness."

Having embraced the cause of christianity, he resolved at all hazards to extend its blessings. Neither the opposition of the Jew, nor the persecution of the Gentile, could deter him from testifying to all nations, the gospel of the grace of God. In spite of Jewish ferocity and Roman arrogance; of temporal interests and personal sufferings, he proclaimed, in

the imperial city and on the hill of Zion; within the walls of Damascus and among the Greeks; in the islands of the sea and among the hills of Palestine, the unsearchable riches of the cross of Christ. Such was the intensity of his benevolence, that he resolved to spend and be spent in the service of his people. "I say the truth in Christ," said he, "I lie not, my conscience bearing me witness in the holy ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ, for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh."

While "performing labours more abundant, receiving stripes above measure, being in prison more frequent, in deaths oft, receiving of the Jews five times forty stripes save one, being thrice beaten with rods, once stoned, thrice suffering shipwreck, being a night and a day in the deep, in journeyings often, in perils of water, in perils of robbers, in perils by his own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren, in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness," he exclaimed, "none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear to myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus."

Although he felt that in "every city bonds and affliction awaited him," he was continually animated with the most lofty and sublime sentiments of charity. Lessons of the purest morals, and discourses of the highest interest, brightened his daily labours; not only when addressing the philosophers of Greece and Rome, but also when traversing the stormy deep, wandering among his inhospitable countrymen, and pining with sickness in confinement. "Though," said he, "I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have

all faith, so that I can remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing."

And conscious that he had practised the morality which he had preached to others, he declared, "I am pure of the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. I have coveted no man's silver or gold, or apparel. Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered to my necessities, and to them that were with me. I have showed you all things, how that, so labouring, ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, it is more blessed to give than to receive."

6. In the life of Jesus Christ, we perceive a purity and sublimity of morals, never exemplified by any other being. In this respect he is not only without a rival, but without one even pretending to be his equal. Our fullest conceptions of moral excellence are abundantly exemplified in the history of this individual. In his conduct, the relative duties, from the minutest acts of decorum to the most stupendous virtues, appear adjusted, harmonized, and placed without a foil, or a single blemish. Here we discover piety without enthusiasm. firmness without obstinacy; strictness without severity; zeal without intemperance; gentleness without servility; obedience without meanness; and benevolence without ostentation. The gentler and severer virtues, mingling in his conduct like colours in the rainbow, present to us an original of moral excellence, never even dreamed of in the annals of heathen ethics. Punctuality and fervour in his devotions; benevolence to all mankind; attention to the laws and customs of his country; obedience to his parents; kindness to his relatives; fortitude in affliction; patience under persecution, and kindness to the distressed, were virtues which appeared with

a prominence in him, not simply unsurpassed, but never equalled, nor even thought of by any other being, appearing in the form of human nature. His whole life consisted in doing good. It was his meat and drink to do the will of his heavenly father, and to finish the work which he had given him to do.

Nor was his moral excellence less conspicuous in his death than it had been in his life. During the former stages of his pilgrimage he had appeared in many deeply interesting and important points of light; but there was still wanting an opportunity to exhibit the greater resources of his goodness. It is not in the bright and sunny scenes of prosperity, under circumstances creating and invigorating hope; when all around are emulous to bestow the meed of praise, and the reward of merit, that a good man appears to the best advantage;—but rather under the frowns of a ruthless destiny, amid the wild and disastrous war of elements; and in the torments and agonies of death. It is then that, in the eye of wisdom, he appears in the sublimity of goodness. And thus it was with the son of God. “Where,” says Rousseau, “is the man? where is the philosopher? who can act, and suffer, and die, without weakness and ostentation? When Plato describes his imaginary just man, covered with all the opprobrium of guilt, yet at the same time meriting the sublimest reward of virtue, he paints precisely every feature in Jesus Christ. Blind, indeed, must be the mind of that man, who dares to compare the son of Sophronicus with the son of Mary! What a distance there is between the one and the other! The death of Socrates, philosophizing calmly with his friends, is the most gentle that can be wished;—that of Jesus, expiring in torments, insulted, derided, and reviled by all around him, the most horrible that can be imagined. Socrates, taking the poisoned cup, blesses the man who gave it to him, and he, in the act of presenting it, melts into tears: Jesus, in the midst of the most agonizing torments, prays for his persecutors! If the life and death of Socrates pro-

claimed him to be a *sage*, the life and death of Jesus prove him to be a GOD.”

7. That the writers of the holy scriptures were inferior, in point of moral excellence, to Jesus Christ, we readily admit; and that some of them, in this respect, were not equal even to uninspired men, we shall not deny; but all of them were advocates of a pure morality, and always, after the greatest lapses, indicated a contrition, which could have originated only in a true sense of their obligations. The record of their imperfections and self-abasement, made with their own hands, considered in its true light, affords decisive evidence of the purity and paramount influence of their moral principles.

8. If, then, the writers of the holy scriptures exemplified a higher standard of moral excellence than other men have done, they must have been what they pretended to be. “By their fruits ye shall know them,” is, for the ascertainment of human character, the safest rule that ever was, or ever can be given; and by the application of this rule, in the present case, the conclusion at which we have arrived is unavoidable. If the sacred writers, without authority, claimed to be the messengers of God, and, in contradiction to reality and truth, established a religion pretending to have originated in heaven; if they devoted their whole life in fixing upon the human mind a system of superstition and falsehood—it is absolutely impossible for them to have been good men; or to have borne, even in an ordinary degree, the fruits of moral excellence. But as they not only did bear these fruits, but bore them in the highest degree of perfection, the justness of their claims to the inspirations of the holy spirit is indubitable. Until nature shall have turned recreant to herself, and we “gather grapes of thorns, and figs of thistles,” it will appear that the writers of the holy scriptures, having been

7. What follows from the inferior morality of the writers of the holy scripture?

8. What is the inference from the above premises ?

pre-eminent in moral excellence, could not have been guilty of persevering in a known system of fraud and falsehood. And if they were not thus guilty, they were what they pretended to be; and being what they pretended to be, they were the subjects of inspiration.

ARGUMENT V.

9. The early and rapid spread of christianity, under the circumstances of the case, is another proof of the divine inspiration of the scriptures.

1. In fifty days after the resurrection of the Saviour, more than three thousand were converted and added to the church; and we are assured that, even in the apostolic age, the sound of the apostles went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.* Nor is the fact of the early and rapid spread of christianity sustained merely by christian writers, but also by Jewish and pagan authors. In a letter to the Emperor Tragan, Pliny the younger says, “ Many of all ranks, and ages, and sexes, had attached themselves to this community—that the contagion of their superstition had not only overspread cities, but also country villages—that the temples were desolated, the holy solemnities neglected, and the sacrifices had no purchasers.” And we have, at the present time, in corroboration of these statements, remnants of christian churches, planted at an early period, in Asia Minor, Africa, the East Indies, Abyssinia, and in almost every portion of the old world. If, indeed, there is any credibility in the testimony of history, of monuments, which have stood for ages, and of rites and ceremonies, as old as christianity itself, the spread of this religion, not only throughout the Roman empire, but through the greater portion of the

9. What is the fifth argument?

1. How is the early and rapid spread of christianity proved?

* Rom. 10:18.

then civilized world, during the apostolic age, is a position beyond the reach of controversy.

2. But that a system of religion, originated by an obscure, unlettered, and isolated individual—a religion hostile to the superstition of the pagan, the early and entire education of the Jew, and the habits, propensities, and views of all mankind—a religion promising to its disciples nothing from the present world but contumely, persecution, and death—advocated only by the fisherman, the tent maker, and the publican; and opposed by the orator, the sanhedrim, and the civil authority—a religion despised by the lordly Roman, ridiculed by the witty Greek, and detested by the superstitious Jew;—that a religion, thus originated, thus supported, and thus opposed, should triumph over every obstacle, enter the very temple, exert an influence in the palace, control the feelings of the army, overthrow the altar, and destroy the very household gods—and that too, in the face of the greatest perils, in defiance of the severest persecutions, and in the absence of all earthly motives, is, unquestionably, the most singular and extraordinary occurrence recorded in the annals of the world; and can be accounted for only upon the supposition of divine interference.

3. A profound and philosophical writer, it is true, has undertaken to account for this occurrence upon natural principles. He contends that the inflexible and intolerant zeal of the primitive christians, in the propagation of their tenets—the doctrine of a future life, which they exhibited under every aspect that could give it weight and efficacy—the claims of the apostles to the power of working miracles—the purity and austerity of their morals—and the union and discipline among themselves—were natural causes, sufficient to produce the early and rapid spread of christianity. And it must

2. How is the early and rapid spread of christianity singular?

3. How, upon natural principles, is the early and rapid spread of christianity accounted for?

be owned, that if those causes were not sufficient, it is impossible to imagine any that could be so. We will then examine them for a few moments.

4. That, upon natural principles, an inflexible and intolerant zeal, in the propagation of christian tenets, could, in the outset, secure to them a rapid and extensive popularity, is utterly impossible. Christians, at the beginning of their career, were not only few in number, but destitute of learning, talents, wealth, and every other qualification, humanly speaking, calculated to conciliate confidence; and, in this condition, intolerance, of all things, was most unlikely to ensure success. For individuals, under these circumstances, to array themselves against the interest and prejudices of mankind, and denounce the doctrines, worship, and customs of every nation under heaven, was inevitably, according to the course of human events, to draw upon them the scorn and derision of the world. It clearly was prudent, in the early christians, to be as conciliatory as possible; and a contrary course, if they were abettors of imposture, would, according to the known principles of human nature, have produced any result sooner than success.

5. Nor was the exhibition of the doctrine of a future life, even under every aspect that human ingenuity could devise to give it weight and efficacy, likely to succeed better. It is not the *exhibition* of a doctrine simply that induces a disposition to receive it, but the *proof* of its *correctness*. Unaccustomed as the Jews and pagans were to a religion purely spiritual, nothing short of an ocular demonstration of its divinity, could, in opposition to every earthly consideration, have disposed them to receive one of this description. An abstract and metaphysical proposition, like that of the immortality of the human soul, having another world for the sphere of its operation, is not likely, without proof, to induce

4. How does the first allegation appear false?

5. How does the second allegation appear false?

the multitude, immersed in sensuality, at the hazard of their reputation, their fortune, and their lives, to embrace it. A clear and satisfactory proof of its correctness only can have this effect. Socrates, with greater talents, higher literary acquirements, and a more imposing reputation, than the apostles possessed, taught the doctrine of a future life, to little or no purpose. With all his weight of character, and persuasive rhetorick, he excited no commotion, and gained but few adherents. Though, under the most impressive circumstances, he promulgated the doctrine of immortality, he was not only put to death for the act, but his doctrine sunk with him to the tomb; and neither the light of science, the sanction of the schools, nor the most engaging eloquence, could revive it, to any great extent, till the coming of the son of God.

6. The apostolic method of announcing the doctrine of a future life, was not only not sufficient to make proselytes, but was, in itself, calculated to repel belief. Instead of mixing with it productions of the imagination congenial with the taste and habits of sensual and depraved beings, as Odin, Mahomet, and other impostors did; the apostles proclaimed it under modifications, in the highest degree, repulsive to the world. The Jew was commanded to renounce the religion of his fathers; the pagan to abandon his superstition and his idols; the warrior to sacrifice his ambition and his glory; the wise and powerful to empty themselves of their worldly greatness; the pleasure taker to relinquish, without reserve, his guilty enjoyments; and every one, under the penalty of eternal torments, to live a righteous and godly life. A doctrine promulgated with such appendages, in the supposition of its being false, and consequently without proof, was not only not adapted to make proselytes, but was eminently calculated to create enemies.

6. What was the apostolic method of announcing the gospel?

7. That the *pretension* simply of the apostles to the power of working miracles, could ensure success, is a position too trifling to deserve notice. They would naturally be required to demonstrate the reality of their pretensions, and in failing to comply with the requirement would provoke universal detestation. This would as certainly have been the case, as that human nature then was, what it now is. That Jews and Gentiles; orators and philosophers; exasperated as they were against christianity, would be induced to lay aside their prejudice and superstition, and submit to every sort of persecution, merely because the apostles *said* they could work miracles, is a position which the most splendid sophistry can never protect from ridicule and scorn.

8. That the pure and austere morals of the primitive christians did contribute to the progress of christianity there is no doubt; but the absurdity of the supposition, that vile and nefarious impostors could yield such precious fruit, is evident at the first blush. If the claims of this new religion were founded on *mere pretence*, the fact, of course, was *known* to its first adherents; and with the knowledge that they were practising a ruinous deception upon mankind, the possession of good morals was impossible. A deliberate and systematic intention to deceive, involving the destruction of human beings, can never harmonize with pure morals. In the long and revolting calendar of mortal aberrations, but few are equal, in turpitude, to cold blooded duplicity and reckless imposture. And, that, in the possession of these qualities, the primitive christians should have continued to make proselytes, by the innocence and purity of their conduct, is one of those conclusions, which refutes itself by its own absurdity.

9. The unanimity of the first christians in adhering to the doctrines and discipline of their community, undoubtedly

7. How does the third allegation appear false?
8. How does the fourth allegation appear false?
9. How does the fifth allegation appear false?

gave them a moral influence, which they otherwise would not have possessed; but still, if their doctrines had been gratuitous in point of fact, and their discipline hostile to the interests and habits of the world, unanimity in their adherents, could not have gained them proselytes. Even union, in a bad cause, could not have overcome prejudice, annihilated self interest, prostrated the usages of ages, and given a new direction to the mental and moral operations of the world. But while there was union among the christians, there was still greater union among those who persecuted them, so that, as far as unanimity was concerned, it vastly preponderated in favor of the antichristian cause.

1. The *natural causes* assigned for the early and rapid spread of christianity being evidently *inadequate*, it follows that this event must have been produced by supernatural agency. The peaceful and resistless march of christianity; its conquest over Jewish prejudice and Roman arrogance; its demolition of heathen errors, though consecrated by the lapse of ages, beautified by classic elegance, and sustained by the arm of civil government; its influence on the Jewish rabbi and philosophic Greek; and its immediate and instantaneous conversion of unbelieving multitudes, comprehending all ranks and conditions of men, furnish a proof of its divine original, which never has, and never can be overthrown.

ARGUMENT VI.

2. The present existence of the holy scriptures, in connexion with the circumstances of the case, prove them to be the word of God.

3. That the four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles are

1. What is the inference from the premises?
2. What is the sixth argument?
3. What is the first proposition of this argument?

now extant, is a position insusceptible of contradiction. Of the existence of these books we have as strong proof as we have of our own. We see them with our eyes, feel them with our hands, and pronounce them with our lips. To question their existence, therefore, is impossible. Every individual, in the possession of the ordinary faculties of human nature, is, by the testimony of his own senses, compelled to admit our first statement.

4. That these books *pretend* to have been written and published *shortly* after the occurrence of the events which they describe, is equally evident. The authors aver that they were contemporary with Jesus Christ, were called by him to the apostleship, and witnessed with their own eyes the principal things which they recorded. St. Matthew informs us that he was called to the apostleship while he was sitting at the receipt of custom.* Mark is said to have been contemporary with Paul and Silas, and to have been employed with them in the first promulgation of the gospel among the Gentiles.† St. Luke says, “That having a perfect understanding of all these things from the first, it seemed good to him also to write and set them in order.”‡ St. John asserts that he was called the “beloved apostle;” that he leaned upon the bosom of the saviour; witnessed his crucifixion, and saw him after his resurrection.§ And St. Luke having written the Acts of the Apostles, they, of course, have the same claim to an early composition that his Gospel has.

Now, as the authors of the books in question claim to have been contemporary with Jesus Christ, it follows that those books pretend to have been written shortly after his crucifixion. For unless the writers lived far beyond the limits of human existence, or wrote after they were dead, they must have written, what they did write, shortly after this event, with which they declare they were contemporary.

4. What is the second proposition of the sixth argument?

* Mat. 9:9, † Acts 15:39, 40. ‡ Luke 1:3. § John ch. 21.

5. Nor is the pretence of these books to an early publication, less evident than to an early composition. St. Luke wrote his Gospel to Theophilus, a contemporary and friend ; and the Acts of the Apostles he dedicated to the same person. The whole portion of scripture, in question, bears upon it the unequivocal pretence of a publication immediately after being written. The writers appeal to living witnesses of the events they describe, and refer to circumstances then in the recollection of their readers.

6. From the certainty that the four Gospels, and the Acts of the Apostles, *pretend* to have been written and published shortly after the occurrence of the events they describe, it follows that that pretence is a *reality*.

7. That books, adapted to the excitement of intense and universal interest, should come into existence, long after the pretended date of their publication, and escape detection, is not possible. Were a book now to spring into existence, describing the adventures of Julius Cæsar, or of any other person of antiquity, telling us the author was contemporary with his hero, and saw the events he describes, with his own eyes, and that his descriptions were published soon after the occurrence of those events, it would be immediately repudiated. Every one would say, "If this book had been in existence as long as it pretends to have been, we should have heard of it before. The history, or at least the fact of its publication, in some form or other, would have been handed down to us. It would have been quoted by some author, read by some individual, or in some other way noticed in the different stages of its progress. Human nature, in matters of this description, is too curious to be imposed upon. For a book to steal down the current of time, without attracting the notice of any one, and suddenly to burst upon the world, in

5. What is the pretence of these books in regard to publication ?

6. What is the third proposition of the sixth argument ?

7. How, in the first instance, is the third proposition proved ?

full proof of its antiquity; or even to pretend, successfully, to an origin long anterior to its existence, is clearly impossible. An instance of this kind never did, and never can, occur. Had the four Gospels, and the Acts of the Apostles, been published subsequently to the period they claim to have been, we, long since, should have heard the universal exclamation, "Here, indeed, is a strange thing! Books, describing the most singular, important, and interesting events, and pretending to have been published shortly after the occurrence of those events, are now heard of for the first time! Years and years have rolled away, and all, concerning these books, have been as silent as the grave; and suddenly books, pretending to great antiquity, spring into existence! Books which no one had ever seen, or heard, or dreamed of before! They cannot be genuine! They bear upon their own front indelible marks of deception and imposture."

8. The books in question, at any period, on being published, must have produced a great sensation. A record of the life, death, and resurrection of an individual; the overthrow of judaism; the introduction of new morals, new customs, and a new faith; and the establishment of a new community, upon new principles, was calculated to excite a deep and universal attention; and the origin and authenticity of such a record would have been examined with the intensest interest; and if deception had been found upon it, an exposure of that deception was inevitable. The restless curiosity, the love of truth, and the desire for distinction, inherent in human nature, and the literary intelligence, which has existed in every age, among civilized nations, would infallibly have led to this result.

9. It being admitted that the four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles actually were published shortly after the occurrence of the events they describe, it follows that the *state-*

8. How, in the second instance, is the third proposition proved?

9. What is the fourth proposition of the sixth argument?

ments contained in these books are *true*. The *time* and *place* in which the publication was made—the *nature* of the events narrated—the *state of things* then existing—and the *effects* of the publication, all concur in forcing upon us this conclusion.

1. If the narrative contained in these books was not true, the authors, of course, knew it to be false; and, in the possession of this knowledge, they would not have made it *public* at the *time* they did. That individuals in the possession of common sense, would declare in writing to their contemporaries, that, to their own knowledge, a person calling himself Christ, was proclaimed by a voice from heaven to be the son of God—that he healed the sick, raised the dead, cast out devils, and controlled the elements—and that, after being crucified, he rose from the dead, and, in the presence of numerous witnesses, ascended up to heaven; and that, in this tangible and specific way, they would make this declaration to persons living at the very *time* the events in question were said to have happened, and refer to thousands and ten of thousands of living witnesses for the truth of the declaration, transcends all bounds of probability.

2. But the four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles were published not only *soon after* the occurrence of the events which they describe, but also in the *very place* in which they were said to have happened. In Palestine, where the miracles of the saviour were performed, the books of which we are now speaking were written and published. And this was done—not from necessity, but from choice. In view, then, of the utter improbability of impostors, who are always apprehensive of detection, selecting such a scene for the operation of a fraud, involving the dearest interest of their fellow-creatures, and consequently calculated to incite the severest scrutiny, the conclusion is, that the statements con-

1. How, in the first instance, is the fourth proposition proved?
2. How, in the second instance, is the fourth proposition proved?

tained in these books are true, and were, at the time of their publication, susceptible of the strongest proof.

3. Nor is the *character* of the narrative of these books less conducive to the same result. Instead of being a congeries of metaphysical propositions, or a tangled combination of incomprehensible dialectics, it treats of subjects admitting of immediate adjudication; subjects which appealed directly to the eye, the ear, and the senses of the people. Whether Jesus Christ had performed the miracles attributed to him or not, was a question, not of *reason*, but of *fact*; and on the solution of this question was *voluntarily staked* the success of his abettors. Had they placed their claims to public credence upon mysterious and contingent circumstances, there would be some ground for apprehending the existence of error or duplicity; but as they came forward in the face of day, and before the searching judicatories of their own country, and placed, cheerfully, the verity of their new religion upon the simple basis of recently existent facts, open to the inspection of every one, there can be no doubt of their veracity. The wildest charlatan that ever existed could not be so foolish as to claim a belief of the divine inspiration of the scriptures, upon the ground of existing miracles, if those miracles were not, and could not be pointed out. But the evidence of miracles, witnessed, as they alledged, by thousands, and tens of thousands of individuals, was, in the first instance, the only kind of proof offered by the evangelists in attestation of their religion; and this evidence they offered repeatedly and triumphantly. Having thus ventured their *all* upon that kind of evidence, which, of all others, was the most easily refuted, if not valid, the inference is, it *was* valid.

4. A critical and candid reference to the state of things, when the books in question were first published, will also

3. How, in the third instance, is the fourth proposition proved?

4. How, in the fourth instance, is the fourth proposition proved?

show, with a high degree of certainty, the correctness of their contents.

5. The Jews, who, in Palestine, still retained supreme authority in matters of religion, were attached to the laws of Moses with an inveterate and superstitious obstinacy; the Gentiles, who wielded the arm of civil government, were not only jealous, but prompt defenders of their faith. Myriads, who, still remembering, with exasperated feelings, impositions which false prophets had practised on them, were on the alert to prevent the recurrence of similar misfortunes; and a deep and morbid prejudice almost universally prevailed against the propagation of a new faith. Such was the state of things when Jesus Christ and his apostles first broached the doctrines of christianity. And that, under these circumstances, men of common sense would attempt to establish a new religion, which not only assailed, with uncompromising severity, the customs and manners of the world, but was advocated only by a few illiterate and powerless individuals, who themselves knew it to be false; and that they would persevere in this attempt, at the risk of every earthly interest, is, without exaggeration, the most improbable thing ever suggested to the mind of man. That the apostles would have assumed an attitude of hostility against the religion of the Gentiles; provoked the unappeasable vengeance of the Jews; and rushed deliberately upon the terrors of a violent death, by a pertinacious adherence to a narrative, knowing it to be false, is in contradiction to every principle of human nature. Such an event not only never did, but never can occur, till human nature has undergone a total and impossible transmutation. That mankind, constituted as they now are, can prefer misery to happiness, or a violent death to a comfortable existence, without the hope of even a contingent remuneration, is no less impossible than the annihilation of

5. What was this state of things?

the laws of nature, without producing any change in the aggregate order of things.

6. The *effects* of the publication of the gospel, are also conclusive proofs of the correctness of its statements. Soon after the ascension of the saviour, many thousands were converted to christianity, and places of public worship established in almost every part of the civilized world. Among the converts to this new religion were men of distinguished learning, talents, and reputation. Paul, the active and efficient champion of judaism; Dyonisius, the areopagite; Apollos, the rhetorician, and many others, whose fame and learning have descended to the present time, bowed to the majesty of truth, as exhibited in the gospel of the son of God.

7. Nor has the force of evidence, which impressed and overwhelmed the minds of those mighty men, been impaired in the lapse of ages; but in every period of the christian era, statesmen, philosophers, and men of letters, have not only yielded to its influence, but become its ardent and successful champions. In the long vista, stretching from the present time to the commencement of the apostolic age, we behold a host of the literati, rising, like pyramids of light, in defence of the christian doctrine.

8. And that a narrative, immediately on its publication, producing such effects, and continuing those effects through the lapse of eighteen hundred years, notwithstanding the rigid, critical, and laborious investigations of the candid, and the most untiring and malignant opposition of the prejudiced, is founded on truth, there cannot, in the eye of reason, remain the shadow of a doubt.

9. The *truth* of the gospel narrative being then admitted,

6. How, in the fifth instance, is the fourth proposition proved?

7. Has the force of this evidence diminished in the lapse of time?

8. What is the inference from the effects of this evidence?

9. What is the fifth proposition?

it follows that Jesus Christ and his apostles were what they claimed to be. If they performed the miracles attributed to them in this narrative, it is impossible to doubt a moment they were assisted by supernatural power. The claims of the son of God and his apostles to inspiration, are absolutely unquestionable, if, in proof of those claims, they performed the miracles attributed to them in the holy scriptures. Just as certain as the history of the New Testament is true, Jesus Christ and his disciples were what they pretended to be.

1. And that they pretended to be the subjects of inspiration, is a position not to be controverted. "The words," said Jesus Christ, speaking to his apostles, "which you hear, are not mine, but the father's, who sent me." "And the holy ghost, whom the father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. For it is not ye that speak, but the spirit of your father which speaketh in you."*

2. The four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles having been written by subjects of divine inspiration, it follows that all the other books of the sacred canon derive their existence from the same source; for the latter are expressly recognized by the former as standing upon this footing. Jesus Christ stamped with divine authority the scriptures of the Old Testament, both by reading them on public occasions, and by declaring, in terms, that he "came not to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfil them." St. Paul, whose inspiration is recognized in the Acts of the Apostles, tells us, that "God, at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake unto the fathers by the prophets."† And St. Peter, who was called to the apostleship by the son of God, avers

1. What is the sixth proposition?
2. What is the seventh proposition?

* John 14: 24, 26.

† Heb. 1: 1.

that holy men of old “spake as they were moved by the holy ghost.”*

3. The deduction then is, “that all scripture was given by inspiration of God.”†

ARGUMENT VII.

4. The conspicuous and exact fulfilment of many prophecies, contained in the holy scriptures, is another proof of their divine inspiration.

5. Of the prophecies here alluded to, we will, on the present occasion, notice only two. The first is recorded in the 52d and 53d chapters of Isaiah, and, according to bishop Lowth’s translation, reads thus:—

6. “Behold, my servant shall prosper;
He shall be raised aloft, and magnified, and very highly exalted.

As many were astonished at him;

(To such a degree was his countenance disfigured, more than that of man;

And his form, more than the sons of men;)

So shall he sprinkle many nations:

Before him shall kings shut their mouths;

For what was not before declared to them, they shall see,

And what they had not heard, they shall attentively consider.

Who hath believed our report;

And to whom hath the arm of JEHOVAH been manifested?

For he groweth up in their sight like a tender sucker;

3. What is the deduction from the whole?

4. What is the seventh argument?

5. Which is the first prophecy selected?

6. Whose version is here used?

* 2 Pet. 1:21.

† 2 Tim. 3:16.

And like a root from a thirsty soil:
He hath no form, nor any beauty, that we should regard
him;
Nor is his countenance such, that we should desire him.
Despised, nor accounted in the number of men;
A man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief;
As one that hideth his face from us:
He was despised, and we esteemed him not.
Surely our infirmities he hath borne:
And our sorrows, he hath carried them:
Yet we thought him judicially stricken;
Smitten of God and afflicted.
But he was wounded for our transgressions;
Was smitten for our iniquities:
The chastisement, by which our peace is effected, was laid
upon him;
And by his bruises we are healed.
We all of us like sheep have strayed;
We have turned aside, every one to his own way;
And JEHOVAH hath made to light upon him the iniquity of
us all.
It was exacted, and he was made answerable; and he opened
not his mouth:
As a lamb that is led to the slaughter,
And as a sheep before her shearers,
Is dumb; so he opened not his mouth.
By an oppressive judgment he was taken off;
And his manner of life who would declare?
For he was cut off from the land of the living;
For the transgression of my people he was smitten to death.
And his grave was appointed with the wicked;
But with the rich was his tomb.
Although he had done no wrong,
Neither was there any guile in his mouth;
Yet it pleased JEHOVAH to crush him with affliction.

If his soul shall make a propitiatory sacrifice,
 He shall see a seed, which shall prolong their days,
 And the gracious purpose of JEHOVAH shall prosper in his
 hands.

Of the travail of his soul he shall see [the fruit] and be
 satisfied :

By the knowledge of him shall my servant justify many ;
 For the punishment of their iniquities he shall bear.

Therefore will I distribute to him the many for his portion ;
 And the mighty people shall he share for his spoil :

Because he poured his soul out unto death ;

And was numbered with the transgressors :

And he bare the sin of many ;

And made intercession for the transgressors.”

7. In order to appreciate the argument founded on this prophecy, it will be necessary to notice its authenticity, the circumstances by which it is characterized, its applicability to Jesus Christ, and its fulfilment.

8. *First, of its authenticity.*—These words, says archdeacon Paley,* were extant in a book containing the predictions of a writer who lived seven centuries before the christian era. And that they were actually delivered *before* the fact to which they are applied took place, or could, by any natural means, be foreseen, is, in the present instance, incontrovertible. The record comes out of the custody of adversaries. The Jews, as an ancient father well observes, are our librarians. The passage is contained in their copies as well as in ours; and they are as anxious to defend its genuineness as we are. With many attempts to explain away its meaning, none has ever been made by them to discredit its authenticity.

7. What is necessary to appreciate the force of this prophecy ?

8. How is its authenticity proved ?

* Evidences of Christianity, article Prophecy.

9. *Secondly, of the circumstances by which it is characterized.*—This prophecy is taken from a writing professedly prophetic; a writing intended to describe such future transactions and changes in the world as were connected with the fate and interests of the Jewish nation. It is not an historical or devotional piece of composition, which, because it happens to be applicable to some future events, or to some future situation of affairs, is presumed to be oracular; but was delivered by Isaiah in a prophetic character, with the solemnity belonging to that character, and has been always understood by the Jewish nation as referring to something that was to take place after the time of the author. The public and official sentiments of the Jews, concerning Isaiah's writings, are recorded in the book of Ecclesiasticus, which was ranked among their sacred compositions. "He saw by an excellent spirit what should come to pass at last, and he comforted them that mourn in Zion. He showed what should come to pass forever, and secret things or ever they came."*

1. This prophecy is not intermixed with other matters; but is entirely separate, and uninterruptedly directed to one scene of things.

2. *Thirdly, of its applicability.*—The application of this prophecy to Jesus Christ is plain, appropriate, and irresistible. It contains no double sense; no figurative language, but what is sufficiently intelligible to every reader, in every country. The obscurities, occasioned by expressions of a local nature, are few, and unimportant. Nor have varieties of readings, or different constructions of the original, as in many other passages of scripture, produced any material alterations in the sense of the prophecy.

9. What are the circumstances which characterize this prophecy?

1. What other circumstance is mentioned?

2. What is its applicability?

* Eccl. 23: 24.

3. *Fourthly, of its fulfilment.*—As to no other person than to Jesus Christ can this prophecy be applied, so in him every particular it enumerates is exactly fulfilled. To this prediction the history of the son of God is an exact parallel. As face answers to face in a mirror, so does the history of Jesus Christ answer to the prophecy of Isaiah. This will appear by noticing, in juxta-position, the history and the prediction. He grew up, in the obscurity of his parentage, like a tender plant, and like a root out of a dry ground. In his external circumstances, he had no form nor beauty, that we should regard him, nor was his countenance such as would be desired. The foxes had holes, and the birds of the air had nests, but he had no where to lay his head. He was despised, and not accounted in the number of men; but was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. The Jews said he had a devil, and was mad, and went about to kill him. He was despised by the whole Jewish nation, and scarcely had any one to esteem him. Some of his relatives doubted his divine original, and his countrymen looked upon him as a blasphemer and impostor. He bore the infirmities and sorrows of many, by alleviating their afflictions and diseases. Yet he was esteemed as one judicially stricken, and smitten of God, and afflicted. The chastisement by which our peace is effected, was laid upon him; and by his bruises we are healed. He was a propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world. We have turned aside, every one to his own way; and JEHOVAH made to light upon him the iniquity of us all. He died, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God. Though he was rich, yet he became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich. As a sheep before her shearers, is dumb; so he opened not his mouth. During his agony in the garden of Gethsemane, his language was, “not my will be done, but

3. How is the fulfilment of this prophecy proved?

thine, O heavenly father." And before his accusers "he answered nothing." By a wicked and oppressive judgment he was taken off; being crucified under circumstances of extreme suffering and degradation. And this was done, not for his own crimes, but for the sins of his people. He was the lamb of God, who, by his propitiatory offering, took away the sins of the world. His grave was appointed with the wicked; but with the rich was his tomb. Though condemned to die with malefactors, he was interred in the sepulchre of Joseph, a rich man, of Arimathea. And notwithstanding he had done no wrong, neither was their any guile found in his mouth, yet it pleased Jehovah to crush him with affliction. "Awake," said he, "O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow; smite the shepherd and the sheep shall be scattered."* And having made his soul a propitiatory sacrifice, he saw a seed that will prolong their days: a seed that have, in the lapse of eighteen hundred years, become as numerous as the dew drops of the morning, and will continue to increase till time shall be no more. Nor will even the end of time put a period to their being and prosperity; for "they that be wise shall shine as stars for ever and ever."† The gracious purpose of Jehovah shall prosper in his hand; and of the travail of his soul he shall see the fruit, and be satisfied. His redeemed, in the day of recompence, will come from the east and the west, and from the north and the south, and will form a multitude, which no man can number.‡ By the knowledge of him shall my *righteous* servant *justify* many; for he of God is made unto them wisdom, *righteousness*, sanctification, and redemption. Therefore will God distribute the many to him for his portion; and the mighty people shall he share for his spoil. The kings of Tarshish and of the Isles shall bring presents; the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. All kings shall fall down before him; all

* Zech. 13:7. † Dan. 12:3. ‡ Luke 13:29. Rev. 7:9.

nations shall serve him. Because he poured out his soul unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors, and bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors, he shall see the fruit of his labour, and be satisfied. And this is the reward of Christ, who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

4. Such, in the history of Jesus Christ, was the fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy. And who, that was unassisted by divine prescience, could have thus penetrated the obscurity of seven centuries? Who, without the inspiration of the holy spirit, could have delineated, with the graphic pen of history, the incidents of the life and death of an individual, who was yet unborn? The answer is, *no one*.

5. Our second argument, derived from prophecy, is founded upon our lord's prediction concerning the destruction of Jerusalem. In the 21st chapter of the Gospel according to St. Luke we have the following remarkable passage:—

“As some spake of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts, he said, take heed that ye be not deceived: for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ, and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them. But when ye shall hear of wars and commotions, be not terrified: for these things must first come to pass; but the end is not by and by. Then said he unto them, nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences, and fearful sights, and great signs shall there be from heaven. But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake. And it shall turn to you for a

4. What is the conclusion from the fulfilment of this prophecy?
5. From what is the second argument on prophecy derived?

testimony. Settle it, therefore, in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer: for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist. And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends, and some of you they shall cause to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake. But there shall not a hair of your head perish. In your patience possess ye your souls. And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter therein. For these be the days of vengeance; that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled."*

6. In this portentous passage are predicted, first, the *destruction* of Jerusalem; and *second*, the *signs* that should precede the catastrophe.

7. It would seem, from the various descriptions of the metropolis of Judea, by contemporary writers, there was scarcely any thing in the world more remarkable than the magnificence and strength of this devoted city. The walls and towers with which it was defended, "for largeness, beauty, and strength, were beyond all that were in the habitable earth."† And its other buildings were of equal costli-

6. What was observable in this prediction?

7. What was the condition of Jerusalem when the prediction was pronounced?

* Mat. ch. 24. Mark ch. 13. † De Bell. Jud. l. 5. c. 4.

ness and grandeur. “The stones employed in the foundations of the temple were above sixty feet in length; and the superstructure was worthy of such foundations.” “There were stones in it of the whitest marble, upwards of sixty-seven feet long, more than seven feet high, and nine broad.”* And yet, in less than forty years after the prediction in question was pronounced, the city and the temple were *utterly destroyed*. After the Romans had taken Jerusalem, Titus ordered his soldiers to demolish its walls, and dig up its foundations.† The Jewish writers themselves acknowledge that Terentius Rufus, who was left to command the army, did with a ploughshare tear up the foundations of the temple; and thereby fulfil the prophecy of Micah:‡ “Therefore shall Zion, for your sakes, be ploughed as a field.”§ And, in confirmation of this remarkable statement, Eusebius also assures us, “that the temple was ploughed up by the Romans; and that he himself *saw* it lying in ruins.”

8. The *signs* which were to precede the destruction of the temple and city of Jerusalem, as enumerated by our blessed lord, were: Persecutions of the christians; the appearance of false christs; the occurrence of wars and rumours of wars; earthquakes; famines; pestilence; fearful sights, and great signs from heaven.

9. *First, of the persecutions of the christians.*—That the christians, previous to the destruction of Jerusalem, were universally hated and persecuted, we have, in the Acts of the Apostles, ample and decisive testimony. Some were delivered to councils, as Peter and John;|| some were brought before rulers and kings, as Paul before Gallio, Festus, and Agrippa;¶ some were killed, as Stephen;** some were im-

8. What signs were to precede the destruction of Jerusalem?

9. How is the persecution of the christians proved?

* De Bell. Jud. l. 5. c. 5. † Ib. l. 7. c. 1. ‡ Micah 3:12.

§ Whitty in loc. || Acts of the Apostles 4:5. ¶ Ib. 18:12.

** Ib. 7:58.

prisoned, as Peter and John;* some were beaten, as Paul and Silas;† and all were hated and persecuted, as the record of the times abundantly testifies. Tacitus, the Roman historian, in describing the persecution under Nero, tells us “that christians were at first apprehended, and then, by their discovery, multitudes of others were convicted, and cruelly put to death, with derision and insult.”‡

1. *Second, of the appearance of false christs.*—A short time before the destruction of Jerusalem, an Egyptian, calling himself a prophet, collected thirty thousand individuals, whom he led through the wilderness, to the Mount of Olives, where, meditating an assault upon the city of Jerusalem, he was met by Felix, and his Roman soldiers, and repelled with great slaughter.§ After him, Dositheus, a Samaritan, pretending that he were the messiah foretold by Moses, deceived many. And Theudas, a magician, induced a vast multitude to assemble on the banks of the Jordan, telling them he would, by his own power, divide the river, and afford them an easy passage over it. But, instead of fulfilling his promise, he was unexpectedly overtaken by a Roman squadron, who slew him, and dispersed his followers.|| Impostors, of some description or other, appeared so often, about these times, that many of them were taken and killed every day.¶ Nor were they only numerous, but exceedingly adroit and successful. “Some of them,” says Jerome, “were so dexterous in performing marvels, that they deceived many; and if the christians themselves had not had the fullest evidence of Christ’s mission, they too must have been deceived.”

2. *Third, of wars and rumours of wars.*—Notwithstanding, at the birth of Christ, there was a general peace, the

1. How is the appearance of false christs proved?

2. How is the existence of wars and rumours of wars proved?

* Acts of the Apostles 4:13. † Ib. 16:23. ‡ Tac. Ann. l. 15.

§ De Bell. Jud. l. 2. c. 13. s. 5. || Antiq. l. 20. c. 5.

Jews soon afterwards became involved in universal war. From the moment they rejected the prince of peace they were given up to hardness of heart and reprobacy of mind. Calamity succeeded calamity, till their city, their temple, and their government were utterly destroyed. Abandoned to their evil passions, they yielded, without reserve, to the spirit of degradation, sedition, and revolt. That portion of their history intervening between the crucifixion and the destruction of Jerusalem was, for cruelty, bloodshed, and suffering, unparralleled in the history of the world.* The number slain by the edge of the sword was incalculable. In the city of Cesæra, at Scythopolis, Ascalon, Ptolemais, Alexandria, Damascus, and Joppa; in the mountains of Assamon; in an ambuscade near Sepporis; at Terrachia, at Gammala, in the village of Idumea, at Gerasa, Marcherus, Cyrene, and in almost every village and city throughout Syria, they had bloody and destructive battles: so that in a few years millions of this wretched people were sacrificed in the field of war, and millions more were reduced to a state of slavery and desperation. Of those above seventeen years of age, many were sent to the works in Egypt; others were distributed among the Roman provinces, to be destroyed by the sword, and by wild beasts; and those under seventeen were made slaves.† A short time previous to the destruction of Jerusalem, the whole world was in warlike commotion. The Jews and Gallileans rose up against the Samaritans, for the murder of some Gallileans, while on their way to the feast at Jerusalem. The Jews, as a nation, declared war against the Romans and their allies, under the administration of Gessius Florus; and a civil war broke out in Italy, while Otho and Vitellius were contending for the empire. Nation was arrayed against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and the Jews fell by the edge of the sword, and were led

* Jos. Ant. l. 20. c. 4 & 7. † De Bell. Jud. l. 6. c. 9. s. 2.—l. 2. c. 13.—c. 14. s. 4.—c. 15. s. 5.—c. 17. s. 1.

captives into all countries.* The whole number of them destroyed in these wars amount to more than one million five hundred thousand.

3. *Fourth, of earthquakes.*—Whether by this word is meant political commotions, as it often means, or the actual convulsions of the earth, is a matter of but little consequence; for the event has justified the prediction, in whichever light it is considered. If it signifies the agitation of political bodies, we have already seen it was accomplished; and if it were intended to be understood literally, we know, from undoubted testimony, that earthquakes were unusually frequent and destructive, within the period referred to by the prediction. One of them took place in Crete, in the reign of Claudius; another in Smyrna, Miletus, and Samos. One occurred in Rome, in the reign of Nero; and another in Hieropolis, Collosse, and Laodicea, by which the three last mentioned cities were destroyed. One took place in Campania, another happened in Rome, in the reign of Galba, and one occurred in Judea, during the celebrated battle between Octavius Cæsar and Anthony.†

4. *Fifth, of famines.*—Josephus tells us that during the investment of Jerusalem by the Roman army, the sufferings of the Jews, for the want of food, were more dreadful than the world had ever witnessed before, or has since. They were such as to extinguish the last spark of human kindness, overpower the feelings of parental tenderness, and compel mothers to kill their sucking children and roast them for food.‡

5. *Sixth, of pestilence.*—As this would naturally follow a long and distressing famine, there is no need of citing authorities in proof of its occurrence. Millions of human be-

3. How is the occurrence of earthquakes proved?

4. How is the occurrence of famines proved?

5. How is the existence of pestilence proved?

* De Bell. Jud. l. 6. c. 9. † Tacit. Ann. b. 12 & 14. Seneca—

Suetonius. ‡ De Bell. Jud. l. 5. c. 10.

ings, pent up in a single city, agitated by every unholy feeling of which human nature is susceptible, reduced to the necessity of feeding on noxious and putrescent substances, unable to attend to the interment of their dead, and totally regardless of the means of health, must, in addition to other calamities, experience the scourge of pestilence.

6. *Seventh, of fearful signs and great sights.*—A short time before the destruction of the holy city, a flaming star, like a sword, hung over it; a comet continued visible a whole year; and during the meeting of the people, at the feast of unleavened bread, at the ninth hour of the night, a great light shone about the altar, and the temple, and continued half an hour; at the same feast, a cow, led to the sacrifice, brought forth a lamb in the midst of the temple; the eastern gate, which was solid brass, and extremely heavy, and could hardly be shut by twenty men, and was fastened by strong bolts and bars, was seen, at the sixth hour of the night, to open of its own accord; and before the setting of the sun, there were, visible all over the country, chariots and armies fighting in the clouds, and besieging cities; at the feast of Pentecost, when the priests were going into the inner temple by night, for the performance of their service, they heard the voices of invisible multitudes, saying, “let us depart hence;” and many other sights and fearful signs, equally prodigious, occurred about those times.*

7. Such being the exact accomplishment of the prediction of our blessed lord, concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, and the signs which preceded that event, the conclusion is, he must have been what he claimed to be:—the founder of the christian religion by *divine authority*. When he stood on the Mount of Olives, and pronounced the prophecy in question,

6. How is the occurrence of fearful signs and great sights proved?

7. What is the conclusion of this argument?

* De Bell. Jud. l. 6. c. 5. s. 3.

there was not the least human prospect of its accomplishment. Who, at that period, could have believed that the Jews, in the enjoyment of universal peace, under the protection of the Roman empire, defended by walls and towns, which seemed to frown defiance upon the world without, and possessed of resources, accumulated in the lapse of ages, would, in the space of forty years, be torn into factions, engaged in war with every nation under heaven, driven into the fast holds of their city, oppressed with famine, pestilence, and mutiny, and finally overwhelmed with temporal and eternal ruin? Who, by any natural sagacity, could have anticipated such a result? Yet Christ not only anticipated, but predicted it, with all its circumstances. Surely, an individual who thus penetrated the future, and foretold events, such as the world had never thought of before, and after the lapse of forty years, stood justified by the exact and entire accomplishment of his predictions, must have been the subject of inspiration.

ARGUMENT VIII.

8. The performance of miracles, by Jesus Christ and his disciples, is another proof of the divine inspiration of the scriptures.

9. Miracles, in the acceptation of the New Testament, generally signify occurrences in contravention of the laws of nature, effected by supernatural agency, in attestation of religious truth. That many of the transactions of Jesus Christ and his disciples claimed to be of this description, is well known to every one. The former, it is said, by a single word raised from the grave one who had been dead four days; imparted sight to an individual who was born blind, simply by the application of clay and spittle; said to the sick, take

8. What is the eighth argument?

9. What are miracles?

up thy bed and walk, and he immediately obeyed; commanded the tempest to be still, and there was a great calm; multiplied five barley loaves, and a few small fishes, to a quantity sufficient to satisfy hungry multitudes; shook, at his crucifixion, the foundations of the earth to their centre; and after being put to death, arose from the dead, and appeared to his disciples alive for forty days.

1. That the occurrence of events in contravention of the laws of nature is *possible*, requires but little effort to perceive. The laws of nature, are those tendencies of matter to cohesion, repulsion, and other phenomena, which it continually exhibits. Now, as matter, in itself, is inert, insensible, and unintelligent; and as the laws by which it is governed are exact, uniform, and indicative of design, they must have been imparted to it by an extraneous and superior agent. Until it is shewn that matter can act intelligibly without intelligence, forcibly without power, and orderly without intention, the inference *must* be, it has received the laws by which it is governed from a power superior to itself; and if so, that that power is competent to reverse or modify them at pleasure.

2. The occurrence of miracles, however, is not only *possible*, but sometimes *necessary*. This evidently was the fact in the days of Jesus Christ. The condition of the world at that period demanded a speedy and thorough reformation. But how could such a reformation be effected without a revelation from God? And how could such a revelation be accredited without miracles?

3. At the time in question the slumbers of a deep sleep had fallen upon the world. Ignorance, superstition, and idolatry, had overwhelmed both natural and revealed religion; leaving only a few traces of its existence among the Jews.

1. Is the occurrence of miracles possible?
2. Is the occurrence of miracles necessary!
3. Why was the occurrence of miracles necessary?

The most enormous profligacy was almost universally practised, not only with impunity, but with approbation and reward. Crime, in its blackest forms, entered into the essential constituents of the Gentile's worship; and the grossest ignorance, superstition, and hypocrisy, were characteristic of much of the Jew's religion.

4. Under circumstances of this description, how was a reformation to be effected? By the agency of reason only? That was impossible. The people were too much debased by ignorance and sensuality to yield, or even to listen to the voice of reason. Plato, Seneca, and Socrates, might as well have given their lessons to the wind as to the great mass of their fellow men. To talk to them of the reasonableness of human obligations, was to discourse in language they did not understand. Efforts to lecture the untutored savage into a belief of the sublime mysteries of christianity would be as likely to succeed, independent of preliminary instruction, as attempts to reform the world, at the time in question, by inductions from moral principles. Of these principles they were ignorant and reckless; and arguments drawn from them, of course, would be inoperative. Plato, an eye witness, hath told us, "that whatever is set right, as it should be, can be so done only by the particular interposition of the gods."

5. It being impossible, in this condition of the world, to effect a reformation, but by immediate revelation from God, such a revelation was to be expected. This, however, could be accomplished only by communicating supernatural light to every individual, or to a few individuals only, invested with power to perform miracles, in attestation of its divinity. The latter method was every way preferable. Had a communication of light been made to every individual, in suffi-

4. What inference is drawn from this condition of the world?

5. How does the necessity of miracles further appear?

cient quantities to accomplish its intended object, it would have so controled the volition of its subjects as to constitute them necessary agents. The beautiful and effective plan of making a revelation of his will, through the medium of his chosen servants, accompanied with power to work miracles, in attestation of its truth, was, in every respect, preferable. This system, instead of superseding the exercise of the mental and moral faculties, called them into operation. The prominent and rational requirement of the divine government, "prove all things, and hold fast that which is good," was, by this plan, solemnly recognized and confirmed.

6. Nor is the supposition that God, under the circumstances of the case, would have resorted to miracles, in attestation of the truth of his revelation, gratuitous. Every attribute of his character authorizes the belief, that he would not have withheld from human beings any knowledge of his will, essential to the perfection of their obedience; and as such a knowledge could not have been communicated without miracles, the fact of his having resorted to them is as reasonable as it was expedient. Having created the earth on which we live for our sustenance and use, adorned the heavens for our comfort and contemplation, and adapted the laws of nature to our wants, the supposition is not unreasonable that he would countermand those laws, when such a dispensation became necessary or expedient. That he actually has adopted this course, we have ample and conclusive proof.

7. The necessity of miracles, to accredit the revelation of his will, is presumptive evidence they have been performed. An infinitely wise, powerful, and good being would not have withheld from human creatures any thing necessary to the

6. What other consideration shows the necessity of miracles?

7. What is the first argument to prove that miracles have been performed.

perfection of their obedience; and it being impossible to obey without a knowledge of his will; and the attainment of this knowledge being impracticable without a revelation; and a proof of this revelation not being possible without miracles, the necessity of performing them was absolute.

Of the occurrence of miracles, in attestation of the inspiration of the scriptures, we have not only presumptive proof, but a mass of moral evidence, amounting in the aggregate to demonstration.

8. As, however, it is not convenient, on the present occasion, to enter into a proof of the performance of every miracle, mentioned in the holy scriptures, we will confine our remarks to one. This shall be the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The christian religion being based chiefly upon this event, if we prove that it actually occurred, we prove all that is necessary for the establishment of our present position.

9. The resurrection of Jesus Christ, which is the crown and glory of christianity, is stated with a perspicuity, and sustained by a kind of evidence, worthy of its importance. It is not deduced by a long and laborious investigation from subtile and uncertain premises, but is a proposition simple in its nature, and incontrovertible in its evidence. Instead of being fabricated by imaginative authors, or conjured into existence by theorizing philosophers, it is stated simply as a matter of fact. "We," saith the apostle Paul, "have testified that he raised up Christ."* The subject, viewed in this light, is a narrow and simple one. The witnesses of the resurrection declare, that Jesus Christ not only died, and was buried, but that he also rose from the dead; and we are left to determine whether this testimony is true or not.

8. What miracle is particularly selected as the subject of proof?

9. How is the resurrection of Christ proved?

* Cor. 15: 15.

1. The witnesses of the resurrection in reality were numerous, but on the present occasion we will refer chiefly to the apostles. And to decide whether their testimony is credible or not, we will direct our attention to the several circumstances under which it was given.

2. The apostles, evidently, had it in their power to know, with *absolute certainty*, whether their declaration was true or false. For several years they had been personally acquainted with Jesus Christ; had been on terms of intimacy with him in all the varieties of his life; had witnessed his agony in the garden of Gethsemane; accompanied him to the bars of Caiphas and Pilate; beheld him expire upon the cross; and conversed with him, according to their averment, for forty days after his resurrection. They had, perhaps, as perfect a knowledge of his character, as any disciples ever had of their master. With these advantages it was impossible for them not to know whether he had risen from the dead or not.

3. Had they deduced their testimony by a process of reasoning, there would be some ground to suppose they were mistaken; but speaking, as they did, of a plain matter of fact, of which their senses had perfect cognizance, there was not left even a possibility of misapprehension. They asserted positively that Christ had risen from the dead, and that they were witnesses of the event, under circumstances that precluded the possibility of mistake. "That," said they, "which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, declare we unto you."*

1. Who were the witnesses of the resurrection?

2. Were the apostles competent to testify to the resurrection of Christ?

3. What was the nature of the apostles' testimony?

* 1 John 1:1.

4. In view of the intimate acquaintance of the apostles with Jesus Christ, and of the nature of the event, of which they testified, we repeat, it was impossible for them not to know whether he had risen from the dead or not.

5. If Christ had not risen from the dead, they surely had no motive to spread the story of his resurrection. Men are universally governed, in some way or other, by their interest, or what they suppose to be their interest. This is a fundamental law of human nature, and can be reversed neither by time nor circumstances. But the apostles could have had no interest in promulgating the pretensions of their master after being convinced they were not true. Instead of deriving any advantage from adhering to his cause, after his crucifixion, such an adherence, they were certain, would draw upon them persecution and death. His disciples they knew, were every where spoken against, not only by the common people, but by every order and portion of the community. It was their interest, under these circumstances, in every point of view, if they had been deceived, to openly and promptly renounce the deceiver. He had told them that he was the son of God; that in some future day he would ascend to his father's throne, and sit in judgment upon the human race; that he would consign the wicked to everlasting punishment, and receive the righteous into life eternal. He had reproved the Jews in the most pointed and galling manner; had condemned the whole Gentile world, and commanded his disciples to come out from among them; and in consequence of having been governed by these sayings they had awakened the displeasure of the whole world. Under such circumstances, to find they had been deceived was sufficient to excite in them the greatest indignation. Instead of continuing to be the abettors of his

4. What is inferred from the intimacy of the apostles with Christ?

5. If Christ had not risen from the dead, had the apostles any motive to say he had?

cause, they would naturally renounce and oppose it. The deception already practised on them, and a wish to avoid its farther consequences, would naturally prompt them to a disclosure of its importance. On the one hand, the promulgation of the story of the resurrection was sure to draw upon them persecution and death, and on the other, an exposure of its fallacy was likely to conciliate pity and forgiveness. To persist, therefore, in the publication of the resurrection, if it were not true, was not only to act without motive, but in opposition to every motive that ever did or can operate upon the human mind.

6. That the witnesses of the resurrection sincerely and conscientiously believed that Christ had risen from the dead, is evident from the sufferings they deliberately and voluntarily encountered in proclaiming the event. Nineteen twentieths of the population of Palestine were violently opposed to the christian system; and having crucified the founder of this religion, they resolved to exterminate his followers. To persist, therefore, in the declaration that Christ had risen from the dead, was to provoke persecution and death. Accordingly the first witnesses of the resurrection were soon exterminated. The prediction of their master, "they will deliver you up to councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues, and ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake,"* was speedily accomplished. In consequence of persisting in the declaration that Christ had risen from the dead, they encountered every form of persecution which human ingenuity could devise. Under these circumstances, the apostles must have had the strongest evidence of the fact, or they would not have continued to declare it. Nothing less than seeing with their eyes, and handling with their hands, could have induced them to per-

6. Did the apostles believe that Christ had risen from the dead?

* Mark 13:9.

severe in the declaration; and this evidence they asserted, even in the agonies of death, they possessed. Stephen, the protomartyr, just before he was stoned, being filled with the holy ghost, looked steadfastly into heaven, and saw, as he said, "the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God."*

7. The agreement of the testimony of these witnesses, under the circumstances of the case, contribute materially to its credibility. Though it is said that Christ was seen after he had risen from the dead, "by Cephas, then by the twelve, and after that by above five hundred brethren at once," there appears to be no contradiction in their testimony. That the twelve apostles, and above five hundred brethren, possessing almost every variety of intellect, and acting under a thousand conflicting circumstances, should concur in the fabrication of a supernatural story, and relate it to friends and enemies without the smallest essential variation, is a thing that never was, and never can be accomplished. There is naturally such a dissimilarity in the operation of human intellect, even on the most simple and ordinary topics, that the moment we enter the regions of conjecture, we fall into contradiction. Had the witnesses of the resurrection contradicted each other's statements, there would be reason for disbelieving their testimony; but as they were consistent and uniform, they must have testified to the truth. Nothing but a conformity to fact could have secured a conformity to one another. This deduction is derived not only from the plainest maxims of human knowledge, but also from every day's experience.

8. Nor did the witnesses of the resurrection wait a single day after it was said that Christ was risen from the dead before they published the event. Instead of retiring in general

7. Did the testimony of the apostles agree?

8. At what time did the apostles testify to the resurrection?

* Acts 7:56.

conclave, for the purpose of inventing a consistent story, they ran, without concert, without a single indication of collusion, and proclaimed that Christ had risen from the dead. In extending this report they exhibited no signs of artifice, or even ordinary precaution; but, as far as the human mind can perceive, were actuated only by the impulse of an important truth. Independent of the apostles, and without the aid of those who were the best qualified to conduct an imposture, Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, announced the resurrection.* At this news all the disciples were surprised, and some of them refused to believe. When it was said to Thomas, "we have seen the lord," he replied, "except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe."† This surprise and skepticism on the part of Thomas, and promptitude and want of concert among the other disciples, incontrovertibly prove that, in this instance at least, they were not guilty of collusion. Had they waited many years, or even only a few months, before they published the story of the resurrection, we should have some reason to doubt their honesty; but while Calvary was yet reeking with the blood of Christ; while Jerusalem and Judea were yet in tumult respecting his pretensions; and while the guards, appointed to prevent his disciples from taking away his body from the sepulchre, were at their post, his resurrection was announced, and announced in the very place it was said to have happened. In Palestine Christ had resided three and thirty years; in Judea he had performed all his miracles; in the garden of Gethsemane he had been arrested; in the city of Jerusalem he had been condemned; on Calvary he had been crucified, and in the same places his resurrection was proclaimed. Confident of the correctness of their story, the disciples seem to have had no diffidence; no apprehensions of falling into error; no an-

* Mat. 28:8. † John 20:25.

ticipations of contradiction; but willing, and even anxious, on all occasions, to submit to the severest scrutiny. Immediately after the event happened; precisely on the spot where it occurred; while his enemies were yet exasperated, the apostles and disciples declared, to the very people who had crucified him, the story of his resurrection.

9. Nor was it alledged, even by their adversaries, that they were ever convicted of inconsistency or falsehood. Although they were examined before the sanhedrim, the high priest, and the Roman judicatories, by civilians and orators of the first order of intellect, they were never surprised into contradiction, or detected in falsehood. Artisans, fishermen, and rusticks as they were, they always eluded the toils of their most subtile enemies. Simple, frank, unaffected, and apparently honest in their narrative, they seem, on all occasions, to have convinced or confounded their adversaries. And this can be accounted for only on the supposition that they were honest. Were a court of justice, at the present time, to exercise but a small portion of their ingenuity in detecting villany in a combination of ignorant and illiterate knaves, success would soon crown their efforts. How then could the witnesses of the resurrection, deficient as they were in learning, ingenuity, and experience, defy the strictest scrutiny, and evade the most artful machinations, had they not conformed to truth? To every one, who is in the habit of investigating evidence, and detecting villany, it evidently is not possible.

1. Such was the character of the witnesses of the resurrection, the air of truth with which they delivered their testimony, and the entire agreement of its several parts, that it continually gained ground, and acquired credit. The church, which, at the death of Christ, consisted only of a

9. Were the apostles ever convicted of inconsistency and falsehood?

1. What was the immediate effect of the apostles' testimony?

few hundred individuals, was enlarged, by the accession of several thousands, in a few days after the publication of the resurrection. Paul, a learned disciple of Gamaliel, Dionysius, an areopagite, Appollo, an orator, and many thousands of Greeks, Romans, and Jews, became the active and fearless defenders of the christian faith. Such was the conclusive nature of the evidence of the resurrection, that it continued to make converts, in despite of the most violent and untiring opposition. Nothing could have secured to this story its power and popularity but the intrinsic force of its proof. In itself it was the most singular and incredible report that ever reached the ear of mortals; and, at the same time, was opposed by nearly all the learning, the power, and the talent of the world; yet it continually gained ground and made converts. The more thoroughly the doctrine of the resurrection was examined, the more conclusively its evidence appeared. In spite of prejudice and skepticism it has forced its way down to the present time with unimpaired credibility. Frequently has it undergone the criticism of the brightest intellects that ever shone upon our world, and the result has never been unfavourable. The bright and penetrating minds of Paschal, Newton, Locke, and others, have gone, in their investigations, to its very bottom; and have been compelled, by the force of evidence, to admit its truth. While dynasties and kingdoms have flourished and mouldered into ruin; systems of natural and political philosophy been adopted, exploded, and revived; and every production of human genius destroyed or modified, the fact of the resurrection has descended to the present period, not only with unimpaired, but accumulated credibility. Time, the mighty spoiler of human inventions, has had no other effect upon the story than to increase the development of its authenticity. And while the principles of human nature continue as they now are, the testimony on which it rests can never be invalidated.

2. As the witnesses of the resurrection knew with absolute certainty whether their story was true or false—as, in this particular, they not only had no motive to promulgate a falsehood, but many motives to suppress the truth—as they incontrovertibly proved the sincerity of their profession by submitting to persecution and martyrdom rather than retract it—as they were perfectly consistent in the several circumstances of their story, although delivered by different individuals, at different times, and before enemies and friends—as they proclaimed it at the time, and in the place, the event was said to have occurred—as the story was presented in such a manner as carried with it a conviction of its truth to all classes of the community—and as this story, under the severest criticism, and in the lapse of eighteen hundred years, has continually increased in credibility—the conclusion is, it *must* be true.

3. And if the story of the resurrection be true, it establishes, beyond the reach of contradiction, the divine inspiration of the scriptures. The supposition that God would give power to Jesus Christ to work miracles, and after his crucifixion raise him from the dead, if the doctrines he promulgated were not true, is infinitely preposterous. So sure as Christ has risen from the dead, he spoke and acted by divine authority; and consequently the claims of christianity to inspiration, sustained as they are by the declarations of the son of God, rest upon the firmest basis.

4. This brief view of the evidences of christianity may not improperly be closed, by adverting to the mischievous consequences of discarding it.

5. A renunciation of our holy religion comprehends a re-

2. What is the summing up of the argument?

3. What is the conclusion of the argument?

4. What are the evidences closed with?

5. What does a renunciation of christianity comprehend?

jection of the doctrine of God's moral government; or, in other words, of his superintendence of the affairs of the present life, and of his righteous retribution in that which is to come.

The abandonment of this doctrine naturally diminishes the action of human kindness. In the belief that necessity, or chance, governs the universe, there is no reason for a concern for human happiness. The only feeling consistent with this belief is a cheerless and stoical acquiescence in the occurrence of events. Skepticism, accordingly, has always been reckless of the public good. After wielding the brightest talents, controlling the most splendid learning, and directing the most ample means, what, we would ask, has infidelity accomplished? Has it dried up the tears of a single sufferer? knocked off the chains of a solitary captive? reclaimed from vice an individual wanderer? or dissipated the sorrows of one human being? Alas! the reverse of this is true. Instead of strewing with flowers the path of life—of brightening the chambers of sadness with celestial joy—and of extending and sweetening the sources of human comfort—it has planted the paths of mortals with the sharpest thorns—invested the hours of their weakness with the deepest gloom—and poisoned, at the fountain head, their only solace. The public triumph of skepticism has ever been the knell of departed joys—the exhibition of its influence the prelude to misery and devastation—and its victory over unstable souls, the commencement of confusion and eternal night. The prominent and legitimate principles of infidelity are at war with the best interests of the social state. Polygamy, suicide, and the worst species of immorality, are necessary corollaries from its premises. Among the rejectors of christianity, individuals may, indeed, be found, who, rising above their sentiments, have cheerfully co-operated in promoting the general good; but instances of this description are not only uncommon, but anomalous. The disbelief of a respon-

sible hereafter, instead of prompting to deeds of kindness, naturally renders inoperative the most lovely principles of human nature. Who, among the myriads of unbelievers that have acted their part upon this busy stage, has exhibited the god-like commiseration of Howard? the active and soul-stirring humanity of Wilberforce? the self-denying benevolence of Swartz? and the humble, but vastly beneficial efforts of Raikes? Such useful and illustrious virtues never were, and never can be cherished under the arid and blighting influence of skepticism.

6. Nor does infidelity simply render inoperative motives to benevolence; but deranges in their operation the elements of our moral nature. That such are its necessary results is evident from the slightest examination. To annihilate the boundaries of vice and virtue, and denounce their difference as only factitious and arbitrary, is to derange the moral faculties of man, and furnish him with the strongest motives to licentiousness and crime. Infidelity, accordingly, has not only scorned the sacred mysteries of the cross, and treated with contempt the system of redemption by the death of Christ, but has set at nought the principles of truth and justice, and regarded as merely conventional, both moral and civil obligations. Wherever it has sounded its raven voice, confusion, and every evil work, have responded to its notes. Before its movements were order and prosperity, and in its train misery and desolation. In the wide and dreary wastes of infidelity there are no verdant spots; no redeeming circumstances; no lovely and cheering incidents; but all is dark, and cold, and blighting. Since the world began, there never was an individual, in any sense, improved by infidelity; but by it, millions have been injured, and forever ruined. Could we exhibit the tears of parental tenderness; the agonies of conjugal affection; the blightings of early and delightful promise; and the numerous forms of mental and moral de-

6. What other effect results from renouncing christianity?

gradation, resulting from a rejection of the holy scriptures, the correctness of this statement would be readily believed.

7. Nor is infidelity less destructive of human comfort than it is of social order. In rejecting the system of redemption by the son of God, it retains no ground on which we can repose hope for pardon and salvation; but leaves us in all the uncertainties of guilty apprehension, and a sense of deserved punishment. Where is the ground of hope, for an awakened penitent, after dashing from him the atonement of the cross? Where can he look for mercy, and rest a hope for heaven, after this catastrophe? Alas! no where. In extinguishing the bright and cheering prospects, opened by the redemption of the son of God, he flings from his reach the only cup of consolation provided for his guilty soul. The sad reality of this statement many an infidel has bitterly experienced. They have often, in treading upon the verge of another world, indicated the most fearful terror and despair. The friends of one, flying from his bed side, declared that his agonies were too terrible to be witnessed—that the furies of Orestes could give but a faint idea of those of Voltaire.

8. Nor is infidelity adapted to sustain us even in the ordinary calamities of life. When misfortunes and old age press upon us, it affords no assistance in bearing them. Instead of presenting to our trembling spirits a solid rock, on which we may repose confidence, it flings us into a sea of trouble, and leaves us unaided to battle with its violence. A more distressing scene can scarcely be imagined than that which is presented by a human being, sinking under the weight of years, overwhelmed with accumulated misfortunes, and destitute of hope beyond the grave. He looks with melancholy upon the brightest actions of the present life, because he imagines they will soon pass into oblivion; he anticipates the period of his dissolution with dismay, for all his prospects

7. Is infidelity destructive of human comfort?

8. Can infidelity sustain us under affliction?

are bounded by the tomb; and he recurs to his present situation with despair, because he believes it admits of no amendment. He may, indeed, attempt to console himself with the hope of annihilation, but in the view of death, abstracted from the cross of Christ, there is nothing consolatory. A belief throwing around the throne of grace a barrier in a dying hour—extinguishing from the soul every hope reaching beyond the grave—and presenting a sea of darkness, unilluminated by a single ray—is as destructive of human comfort as it is contrary to the christian faith.

9. And while infidelity is powerless in consoling us in the view of our own mortality, it affords us no alleviation in the death of others. Into that cup of bitterness, which we are destined to drink in the loss of beloved friends, it infuses no sweetness. That their existence has terminated—that they have forever perished—and that henceforth they will remain unconscious of all that is doing in the universe—is a belief that certainly can afford no relief. Were the genius of infidelity to approach an afflicted mother, weeping at the tomb of her departed child, would he appear in the habiliments of peace and loveliness? Would he, in tones of kindness, dry up her tears, and soothe the burning anguish of her heart? Would he unfold scenes of blessedness beyond the skies, in which the object of her affection is participating, and assure her that, under circumstances of inconceivable felicity, a reunion will be effected? Or would he not appear as the spectre of a coming storm, and, in tones portentous as the distant thunder, extinguish the last hope throbbing in her bosom?

1. That such have been, and now are, the effects of rejecting the holy scriptures, is a matter of the most authentic history. And we would ask if such *can* be the effects of truth? Is it *possible* that the god of nature would construct

9. Can infidelity alleviate bereavement?

1. What is the conclusion from these effects of infidelity?

a religion for human beings productive of such results? What! a religion at war with every individual and social interest? A religion cheerless as the grave, and comfortless as the king of terrors! It is IMPOSSIBLE! Such a religion is a libel upon the god of nature, and the god of grace. He is a being of unbounded love, and designs, in all his operations, to promote the happiness of his creatures. But this religion (if a religion it may be called) is the bane of charity, the spoiler of social order, and the murderer of human comfort. It exhibits, in the features of its own deformity, "proofs, strong as holy writ," of its guilty origin.

2. Should we feel the slightest inclination to embrace the principles of infidelity, we should stop a moment, and reflect upon their tendency. Will they make us better citizens, better husbands, better fathers, better children? Will they smooth the declivities of human life, and prepare us to encounter, with greater resignation, our last change? And if they will not, let us consider whether it will be wise to exchange the religion of the holy scriptures: a religion which sheds upon life its loveliest charms—upon death its brightest radiance—and upon the future its sweetest prospects—breathing, from its inmost soul, "glory to God on high, peace on earth, and good will towards men"—for the cold, the blighting, and the destructive principles of infidelity? Let cool and unsophisticated reason answer, and let us act accordingly.

3. The light of nature and the light of revelation, being both intended to guide us in the search of duty, it will not be improper, in the present place, to consider, for a few moments, their relative importance.

4. That the light of nature discovers, in some degree, the

2. How should we oppose an inclination to embrace infidelity?

3. What is the next subject of discussion?

4. What is the first instance of the defectiveness of the light of nature?

being and perfections of the deity, we have no doubt; but even in this respect it is imperfect and unsatisfactory. While we perceive in the operations of nature a mixture of severity and kindness; as much of human misery, perhaps, as happiness; and often a promiscuous destruction of the evil and the good, we have no perception, by the light of nature, of the divine **MERCY**. Although we daily feel that our passions usurp dominion over our reason; that the good we would, we do not; and the evil we would not, that we do; the light of nature affords no assurance of forgiveness; no ground on which we can hope for pardon. That we are offenders in the eye of justice, and deserve punishment, are facts too evident to be denied; but how to atone for our delinquency, or to avert the punishment we have deserved, we are unable, by the aid of reason merely, to conjecture. Boast as we may of nature's teaching, it affords no assurance of pardon to guilty sinners. Instead of presenting a charter of salvation written upon the skies, impressed upon the rocks, or any where traced upon the works of creation, it leaves the ground of our hopes invested with the deepest gloom. Where can we obtain assurance, by the light of nature, that God will be merciful to us? In his works? they indicate wrath as well as kindness. In the history of man? that abounds with punishments as well as favours. Where then can we turn our anxious eye, and behold, by the light of reason, secured to us, the mercy of our heavenly father? Alas! no where. For our solicitude there is no assurance; for our wounded spirit there is no balm; and for our guilty fears there is no quietude.

5. But while obscurity mingles with the light of nature, a bright and steady light shines from the word of God. Exhibiting the wonderful dimensions of divine love in the cross of Christ, it assures us "that though our sins be as scarlet,

5. Do the scriptures supply this defect?

they shall be as white as snow: and though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool;”* that God is not only *willing*, but *anxious* to bestow upon his repenting creatures the riches of forgiving love; that his language is, “How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee, Israel? How shall I set thee as Zeboim? My heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together.”† Every where, in the holy scriptures, God is represented as being “long suffering to us ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance and live.”‡

6. Here, then, we have a broad and solid basis, on which we may repose hope. Here, may we dismiss our guilty fears, solace our pensive hearts, and exclaim with the purest joy, “the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song, he also has become my SALVATION.”

7. Nor is the light of nature less inferior to that of revelation in disclosing the system of divine providence. Reason, indeed, recognizes the operation of general laws, both in the physical and moral worlds; but its perception of their individual application is inadequate. Events, in its view, are produced by a regular succession of natural causes; and though these causes are supposed to be productive of good in their ultimate results, they are excluded from special reference to single objects. The course of things is believed to be inevitable, and is less attributed to the immediate power of God, than to intervening causes, inherent in the constitution of nature.

8. But this theory of the divine providence is not adapted to the exigencies of human beings. It is not enough to be informed that events have, upon the whole, a benign and salu-

6. What is the result of this scripture revelation?

7. What is the second instance of the defectiveness of the light of nature?

8. How is this theory of divine providence deficient?

* Is. 1:18. † Hos. 11:8. ‡ 2. Pet. 3:9.

tary tendency; we are solicitous to know what bearing they have upon us. Little or no comfort is derived from the doctrine of a general providence in cases of individual distress. We may, indeed, submit to events, over which we have no control, with some degree of cheerfulness; but the submission, in reality, will often be a matter of necessity—not of choice. An assurance that, in the general occurrence of events, there is one presiding over them, who applies them to our individual interests, with unerring and parental skill, is indispensable to our personal comfort. In the absence of this assurance the afflicted have nothing to soothe their feelings but the lapse of time; and often after weeks, and months, and years have passed away, the language of their hearts still is, “O, time! when wilt thou bring peace to my aching heart? when will thy healing stream lave my bleeding soul, and thy oblivious power soothe the anguish of my stricken spirit?”

9. But in the holy scriptures, a system of divine providence is exhibited, exactly commensurate with our wants. We are there told, not only that all events are directed with unerring wisdom, in reference to the general interest; but, that every one of them, with more than parental kindness, is applied to the promotion of our happiness; that the very hairs of our head are numbered; our tears bottled up; and that *every thing* shall work together for our good, if we love God, if we are the called according to his purpose.*

1. Believing in such a providence as this will not fail to contribute to our happiness. Not only will it diminish the pressure of affliction, blunt the poignancy of bereavement, and dry up the tears of anguish, but inspire the cheerful and submissive sentiment, “Not my will be done, but thine, O heavenly father.”

9. What is the scripture representation of divine providence?

1. What is the effect of believing in this representation?

* Rom. 8: 28.

2. Of the insufficiency of reason's providence to render mankind happy, under the varying dispensations of affliction and disappointment, the more considerate, in all time previous to the christian era, bore their decided testimony. Tossed upon the bosom of a stormy sea, wrapped in darkness, mitigated only by a few feeble and sickly rays, they often became the victims of despair. Philosophy had exhausted her poor resources; morality had contributed her last feeble efforts, and the arts had wasted their ever-varying expedients—but all—all had been in vain! There gleamed upon their pathless voyage, only after long and fearful intervals, a pale and bewildering ray, while all beyond the grave was hopeless and impenetrable gloom. Anxiety, with her sickening train, fastened upon their hearts, and rendered intolerable their present sufferings, by infusing apprehensions of greater yet to come. But when the gospel of Jesus Christ, illumined by the light of heaven, was preached to our hapless race, it dispersed the clouds which had long shrouded the designs of God, and sent forth a bright and cheering light, destined to regenerate the world. Mankind, rising from a night of deep and bitter mourning, realized the auspicious truth, "that our light afflictions, which are but for a moment, shall work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."*

3. Nor is the light of reason equal to that of revelation in furnishing motives to moral purity.

4. Motives of this description, suggested by the light of reason, are nearly all drawn from the advantages of virtue in the present life; and notwithstanding these, on the minds of a few enlightened and favoured individuals, may have produced salutary effects, on the great mass of human beings

2. What did the ancients think of reason's providence?

3. What is the third instance of the defectiveness of nature's light?

4. How does this defectiveness appear?

* 2 Cor. 4:17.

they have been entirely inoperative. Human nature is too perverse to be restrained by the deductions of simple reason, bounded in its views by temporal good. Its government, in accordance with moral rectitude, requires something more effective than the schools of Plato, Seneca, and Confucius ever furnished. The dogmas of those philosophers shone with infinitely greater splendour in the groves, the academics, and the halls of legislation, than they did in the lives of their disciples. To dissolve the dominion of the carnal mind, to reclaim the wandering from the paths of vice, and to cleanse the polluted from their impurity, require the operations of an agent infinitely more powerful than human reason. An exhibition of the doctrines of the cross; of the high and holy destiny reserved in heaven for the just; and the deep damnation which awaits the guilty after death, accompanied by the powerful and renewing influence of the holy spirit only, can produce a virtuous and pious life. Corroborative of this position, we have the whole history of the world. In less than half a century more was accomplished, in the production of good morals, by the preaching of the twelve apostles, than human learning, simply, had ever done. Chaldea, Egypt, Greece, and Italy, had successively been illumined by philosophy's brightest ray; but this, on the morals of the multitude, had no effect. Those classic and enlightened countries, notwithstanding the instructions of their mighty heroes, splendid orators, and illustrious sages, were filled with all unrighteousness. But the apostles, illiterate, and without reputation, as they were, effected, in the lapse of a few years, a reformation, which had defied the united efforts of science and literature to accomplish. They proved, in every place they preached, that the gospel of Jesus Christ is the power of God unto salvation to every one who believeth, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile.

4. At the present moment, where human reason is the only

4. How, in the second instance, does this defectiveness appear?

guide, morality is scarcely known. Proofs of this fact are presented, not only in the vallies of the Niger, the Gambia, and the Senegal; but also, in the more enlightened regions of Hindostan, Canton, and Kiangku. In every portion of the earth, excluded from the light of revelation, a moral darkness, blighting to the noblest feelings of human nature, universally prevails. Charity, and her lovely train, are almost entirely unknown, and power only is regarded as the rule of right. Rapine, cruelty, murder, and licentiousness are the wretched substitutes for the beautiful morality of the son of God.

5. If, however, the light of reason were equal to that of revelation in disclosing the character and will of God in reference to the present life, it is manifestly inferior in the exhibition of the realities of that which is to come. Whatever may be the vigour and correctness of the human intellect in deducing the nature and extent of human duties, it is absolutely bounded in its operations by the limits of mortality. Reason, in its strongest efforts, unaided by revelation, cannot overstep the boundaries of time. Bold and rapid as its flight may be in traversing the fields of human learning, the moment it arrives at the verge of the material world, it is arrested. The dark clouds which brood upon the grave absolutely defy the efforts of its prying eye, and to its most anxious wishes oppose an impenetrable barrier. Immortality and its high immunities are objects of its wishes rather than of its hopes. Death, to the eye of reason, "is a long and cheerless night: a night which glooms us at the noon-tide ray, and wraps our thoughts at banquets in the shroud."

6. But the revelation of the holy scriptures, penetrating the deep recesses of the tomb, unfolds the realities of another world. It exhibits ground, on which to place our trembling hopes, and displays to our eye of faith the most cheering and

5. What is the fourth instance of the defectiveness of nature's light?
6. Does revelation supply this defect?

delightful scenes. Even in the chambers of deep and bitter mourning, while bending over the faded forms of beloved friends, it affords the sweet assurance, that though we may now be parted, we shall meet again; that, in the morning of the resurrection, if we are faithful unto death, we shall be delivered, not only from the afflictions of bereavement, but also from the dominion of the carnal mind; from the cold and dreamless slumbers of the grave; from the pains and torments of the second death, and all the penalties of God's broken law. "The ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."*

* Is. 35: 10.

BOOK II.

Of the nature, adaptations, and relations of human beings.

1. The design and authenticity of the lights of reason and revelation, having been discussed in the preceding pages; the constitution and relations of human beings, will be the topics of the present book.

2. Human beings comprehend two distinct natures: the one is *matter*, and the other *mind*.

3. **MATTER** is that substance of which every body is formed: the substratum of all sensible qualities, whether the parts composing the substratum be perceptible or not. Its chief qualities are solidity, extension, divisibility, inertia, and attraction.

4. That the human body is material, is a position which no man, in the possession of his sober senses, can deny. It is not only solid, extended, capable of being divided, equally indifferent to rest and motion, and possessed of all the qualities of attraction; but of every other attribute of matter. If an individual doubts the correctness of this position, we have no proof, by way of argument, to offer him; for having set aside the testimony of his senses, the deductions of reason would be unavailing.

5. **MIND** is that immaterial—intellectual—and immortal being, which vivifies and governs the living body of man.

1. What are the topics of the present book?
2. What are human beings composed of?
3. What is matter?
4. How is the body proved to be material?
5. What is mind?

6. The fact of the immateriality of the human soul, or in other words, of its essentially different properties from mere matter, is supported by the highest evidence. We are compelled by the testimony of our own senses to believe that mere matter is utterly destitute of either sensation, perception, or volition; and while this belief is formed by the natural and necessary operations of our mind, we are conscious of the existence of a principle within, possessing all these properties. Now, as the highest faculties, with which we are furnished by the God of nature for the recognition of truth are consciousness and perception, if these deceive us we must necessarily become the victims of error. But that God, in the formation of human beings, would so construct the elements of their existence, as to render their testimony uncertain, even in their most simple and ordinary operation, is a supposition, which strikes alike at the consistency of the divine being, and the reality of every thing. Either our perceptions of the difference between mind and matter are really true, or God has so formed us that they must necessarily be false. The latter conclusion being infinitely absurd, the former must be taken as true. To the correctness of the testimony of our nature that we are in possession of properties superior to all the known modifications of matter, we have pledged the consistency and truth of God—and beyond this proof can never go.

7. The intellectual qualities of mind comprehend perception, the power of comparing ideas, and deducing inferences; and that human beings are in possession of these faculties, we are as certain as we are of our own existence. We witness their operations in the conduct of our fellow-creatures, and are conscious of their presence in our own minds. That the sun exists, is a position less evident than that the human mind is in possession of intellectual powers.

6. How is the mind proved to be immaterial?

7. What do the intellectual qualities of mind comprehend?

8. But while the immaterial and intellectual nature of the human mind is proved by evidence of the highest kind, its immortality is demonstrated by a different process. The evidences in both cases ultimately rest upon the same basis; but they are brought to this result by different actions. The process in the latter case may, indeed, be less agreeable to human indolence, but its result to the diligent and candid student will not be less satisfactory.

9. The *possibility* of the immortality of the human mind is demonstrated by the works of nature. Vegetation, in all its varieties, contains a principle of vitality, which, surviving the dissolution of its coarser parts, discloses, under favourable circumstances, the freshness and verdure of its former existence. Seeds which had been long emboweled in the earth, have been known, after their disinterment, to develop a living and vegetative principle. Of the correctness of this statement we have ocular proof; and yet to an individual unacquainted with the laws of nature, the perpetuation of the principle of life in seeds, after the decay and destruction of their parent stock, would appear less likely than the immortality of the human soul.

1. Nor have we instances of a continuous vital principle only in the vegetable; but also in the animal kingdom. Like the fabled phoenix, many species of beings, rising from the ruins of their predecessors, reappear in a state of increased beauty and animation. Though their bodies become the subjects of decay, their animal identity is still preserved. Instances of this description, in the natural history of the chrysalis, are too frequent and familiar to require proof.

2. What then is common in two departments of nature is surely possible in a third of a similar nature. If the living

8. How is the immortality of the soul proved?

9. How does it appear that the immortality of the soul is possible?

1. From what else does the immortality of the soul appear possible?

2. What is the deduction from these instances?

principle, both of animal and vegetable substances, not unfrequently survive the destruction of its coarser parts, the possibility of the mind, retaining its existence, after its separation from the body, cannot be doubted.

3. Nor is the immortality of the soul simply *possible*; but, under the circumstances of the case, highly *probable*. It is a dictate of sound philosophy that we should expect things to continue as they are, unless we have proof the contrary will happen.

4. In the whole range of physiological research, there is not the slightest proof that the soul will become extinct at the dissolution of the body; but all the facts attainable on this point lead to the expectation of a different result. Death consists simply in the derangement and separation of our corporeal particles; but this process can never affect the mind: for being a simple essence it is not susceptible of decomposition.

5. That mind is not dependent on matter for its being, is highly probable from the dissimilarity of their natures. The one is a thinking energy, and the other is an unthinking substance; the one possesses power to begin and continue motion, and the other is inert; the one possesses consciousness, and the other is without feeling; the one is, in many respects, beyond the cognizance of the senses, and the other is generally accessible to their notice; the one is composed of parts, and the other is a simple essence; the one is susceptible of division, and the other is incapable of separation.

6. From the fact, then, that our souls now exist, and there being no evidence that they will ever cease to be, the true and philosophical deduction is, they will exist forever.

3. How does the immortality of the soul appear probable?
4. Is there any proof that the soul will become extinct at death?
5. Is mind dependent on matter for its being?
6. What is the conclusion of this argument?

7. Corroborative of this conclusion is the fact that human beings die in the full possession of faculties, for the maturity and development of which, no opportunity had been afforded. Some expire just as their intellectual and moral powers begin to operate, and many before that period arrives. Should their souls become extinct at death, it would seem that those faculties were made in vain. Such a conclusion, however, would derogate both from the wisdom and the power of God. A being of infinite perfection can never make, simply, for the purpose of destroying. Nor will his providence permit the occurrence of events not in accordance with his dignity. Every act of God is designed to promote his own honour in the happiness of his creatures; and no event ever did, or ever can transpire that will, in any degree, prevent the accomplishment of this object. All events, the death of infants as well as that of men, being under the control of God, the supposition is not unreasonable, that those faculties, which are prevented from development, by an act of his, will have assigned for them, beyond the limits of mortality, not only a sphere of action, but an opportunity for the attainment and exhibition of maturity. That infants, just emerging into intellectual and moral life, exhibiting all the indications of an improving mind, should, on the occurrence of an early death, be stricken into non-existence, seems impossible. Those elastic powers, which, under favourable circumstances, would ripen into talents of the highest order, will not—cannot be quenched in the night of death. If infants are not immortal, why are they possessed with the attributes of mind? Why are they cut down in the morning of their being, and those bright powers, which were capable of the highest splendour, extinguished in the darkness of the grave? So sure as God works not in vain; as he imparts to infants, mental and moral powers, he will afford them, either in this life, or in that which is to come, an opportunity for development.

7. What strengthens this conclusion?

8. This conclusion is strengthened by the well known fact of the expansibility of mind. God, in regard to its enlargement, has never said, "hitherto thou shalt come and no further," but has evidently possessed it with capabilities of indefinite improvement. So long as it is unembarrassed by the instrument of its operations, it evinces a capacity for new acquirements. It not unfrequently triumphs over pain, even in the agonies of death, and seems, in the full possession of its vigour, to quit the body.

9. In the possession of growing powers, restricted only by the shackles of mortality, the supposition that its existence will be continued merely while it is connected with the body, is unreasonable. Called into existence to contemplate the character and government of God, it will, and must, have time to accomplish the object of its being. Made capable of acquiring the boundless riches of natural, moral, and religious knowledge, it clearly is not intended to be merely the creature of a day. As God would not have created the universe for the occupancy of a mite, so the interminably progressive capacities of the human mind could not have been designed for a transitory duration.

1. Confirmatory of this conclusion is the adaptation of the principal faculties of the mind. Those faculties are perception, judgment, and memory; and are naturally fitted to investigate the most *enduring* portions of the universe. *God*, in the boundless variety of his providence and government—*truth*, in its infinitely diversified relations to natural and moral science—and time, in its never ceasing progress and results, are objects, for the contemplation of which, those faculties are naturally designed. Who, in the view of this fact, can question the immortality of the soul? Who can believe,

8. What corroborates this conclusion?

9. What inference is drawn from the growing powers of mind?

1. What is confirmatory of this conclusion?

that destined, by its nature, to the examination of things *eternal* in their duration, it should itself be *transitory*? Why should God, in the constitution of mind, *adapt* and *incline* it to the scrutiny of subjects of unlimited continuance, if, after the lapse of a few years, it be destined itself to return to nothing? Every man of reflection would condemn a mechanic for fitting a machine to the waste of ages, if that machine were intended to exist only a few hours. How then can we impute to God a procedure that would be repudiated in man? So sure as there exists in the economy of nature an adaptation of creatures to the objects of their creation, man must be immortal. Nature, in possessing him with faculties adapted to the contemplation of objects eternal in their duration, proclaimed that his career shall be commensurate with the existence of those objects. The character of the mental faculties bear, upon their very front, the impress of immortality.

2. In support of this conclusion may be cited the irrepressible love of life naturally existent in the human mind. To survive the period of our mortal existence; to possess a being not subject to extinction, is an object of our fondest and strongest wishes. Scarcely any catastrophe, in the range of human conception, is so entirely dreadful, as that of annihilation. To be consigned to the silent grave, without the hope of resuscitation, while the dark clouds of oblivion settle upon our name, our memory, and our being, constitutes an event too revolting to contemplate. From such a scene the soul shrinks back with horror, and clings to life with convulsive and undying ardour. Of all the feelings which animate the human mind, the love of life is the first which begins to operate, and is the last that will cease to exist. Mingling, in some form or other, with every element of our nature, it imparts a character to every action that we

2. Does the love of life support this conclusion?

perform; sheds a ray of light upon every hope that we possess, and imbues with deeper bitterness every apprehension that we feel.

3. What, then, does this natural love of life proclaim? Certainly the possibility of its gratification. The great parent of the universe would not have incorporated in our nature, a desire that must inevitably be disappointed. Why should the creator of all things thus sport with human beings? Why, in our formation would he have rendered the love of life the strongest of all feelings, and then crush it in annihilation? The tendency of our constitution, in every other instance, indicates the objects designed for our possession; and why should not the desire we possess for immortality also intimate the certainty of its accomplishment?

4. Of the correctness of this deduction we have a still stronger proof in the character of the divine government. Infinitely just and holy as God is, his moral subjects must be rewarded according to their merits. An accidental, or capricious distribution of rewards and punishments never can proceed from the divine administration. Reason and revelation declare that God will reward every man according to his doings. If this be the fact, there must be a state of retribution beyond the grave: for it is obvious that such a state of things does not exist in the present life. Nothing is more notorious than that the virtuous are often the subjects of persecution and affliction, while those who neither fear God nor regard man, possess, in great abundance, the good things of the present world. The absence of an exact and retributive providence in regard to human actions, in this state of existence, is a fact too evident to be denied. This state of things now exists, always has existed, and will probably long continue to exist. If, then, the universe is under the govern^d

3. What does the natural love of life proclaim?

4. Does the character of the divine government prove the doctrine of immortality?

ment of a righteous ruler, there must be another state of existence for the exhibition of his equity. The clouds which now rest upon his dispensations must be dispelled, and all his moral subjects rewarded according to the deeds done in the body. Upon this basis only can we “assert eternal providence, and justify the ways of God to man.”

5. The doctrine of the immortality of the human soul, under some modification or other, has been believed at all times, and by all people. Discordant as their opinions have been upon other topics, upon this there has been a striking coincidence. Pagans, at an early period, incorporated the principle of a responsible hereafter into their mythology, and have retained it to the present time. It exists alike in the classic page, the rustic song, and the mystic ceremony.—But how can we account for this fact but upon the supposition that the doctrine is correct. That a belief existing in the human mind, at all times, and under all circumstances, should be simply an effect of the imagination is not possible. From the universality of its existence, under all the revolutions and modifications of the social state, it evidently cannot be a factitious sentiment; but a principle growing out of the organization and condition of human beings, or impressed upon them by the holy spirit;—and consequently true.

6. So intimately blended with the feelings and interests of human beings is the doctrine of immortality, that they can scarcely exist without it. The moment an individual blots it from his creed, he sinks to a level with the beasts that perish. In the estimation of his country's laws, he is unworthy of belief, even when under the solemnities of a judicial oath. He breaks from the moorings of social order, and plunges, without a rudder, or a chart, into a dark and tempestuous sea. He, at once, divests himself of all those powerful considerations which animate him to virtue, or console

5. What farther proof have we of the immortality of the human soul?

6. What is the next proof of the immortality of the soul?

him under afflictions. All those pleasing anticipations of a recompense beyond the grave are dashed from him. Those high and holy hopes, which have produced the noblest instances of heroic virtue; which have supplied the sweetest and most availing antidote to the sorrows of the world; and which have so often illumined, with a ray from heaven, the couch of him, who feels that every worldly stay is fast dropping from beneath him—are annihilated. If there be no responsible hereafter for our conduct in the present life, what rule is there to guide in the performance of human actions? What is there to stir to the accomplishment of those duties, from which no personal advantages are to be derived? What to restrain from those crimes, by which the individual sees, or fancies he sees, he will be the gainer in the present world? Take away the belief of immortality, and what will be left behind, but the jail or the gibbet, neither of which will long restrain from the commission of the greatest crimes?

7. To these considerations may be added the testimony of the holy scriptures. The doctrine of immortality is, indeed, the basis of our holy religion. If man is not immortal, why did the son of God become incarnate? What meant his sighs, his groans, his dying agonies? These were all without meaning, if man is not to live beyond the tomb: for in this result they accomplished nothing. It is because the human soul is destined to survive its separation from the body, and exist forever, either in happiness or misery, that Christ died upon the cross.

8. But upon this subject farther reasoning is unnecessary:—for we have the plain and decisive testimony of inspiration: “These,” said Jesus Christ, referring to the wicked, “shall go away into *everlasting punishment*; but the righteous into

7. What other proof may be adduced of the immortality of the soul?

8. What scripture authorities are adduced to prove the immortality of the soul?

life eternal.”* And St. Paul declares that Christ “hath brought life and *immortality* to light through the gospel.”†

9. These, and other passages of scripture, too numerous to quote on this occasion, place the doctrine of immortality upon the firmest footing. Indeed the whole system of revelation is based upon this important and fundamental principle.

1. From this general description of the composition of human beings, we will proceed to a more particular analysis of their mental operations.

2. The soul isolated from every thing in the universe would possess nothing but a consciousness of existence. In this condition it would acquire no knowledge, exercise no volition, nor perform any action. But connected with the body it becomes acquainted with material things; and these things, operating upon its natural susceptibilities, produce all those animal, moral, and intellectual phenomena which are exhibited in the life of man.

3. Writers on mental philosophy have generally ascribed to the human mind a variety of faculties; but after the severest scrutiny, it seems to us that those phenomena, termed faculties, are rather *actions* than separate powers. The mind, in our view, is *one* and *indivisible*; and those operations which have been denominated faculties, are only the same energy, excited to different actions, by various causes.

4. But although the mind is a simple and indivisible substance, it is capable, from its numerous susceptibilities, of performing a variety of operations. These, for the sake of

9. Are there any other authorities to prove this point?

1. What next do we proceed to?

2. How does the soul become acquainted with material things?

3. Does the soul possess a variety of faculties?

4. Is the soul capable of performing a variety of operations?

* Mat. 25:46.

† 2 Tim. 1:10.

perspicuity, we will divide into the following classes, namely, *primary*, *secondary*, and *adventitious*.

5. The primary class of operations consists of those actions which are *simple*, or *uncompounded*; and comprehends *feeling*, *perception*, and *memory*.

6. By the term feeling, we mean, in the present instance, not only a consciousness of existence, but also of pleasure and pain. "Consciousness," says Dr. Brown, "is a general term, expressive of the whole variety of our feelings." These terms, therefore, will be used synonymously.

7. Feeling is an essential quality of mind; the substratum or basis of nearly all its operations. We can have no conception of mind without consciousness, or of consciousness without mind. They imply one and the same thing. The senses are often the instruments of exciting and modifying feeling; but never of creating it. All the evidence we have, or can have, upon this subject, authorizes the conclusion, that *mere matter*, under any circumstances of modification, is incapable of feeling.

8. This characteristic quality of mind naturally inclines us to make our own enjoyment the first object of pursuit. A desire for happiness, in sentient beings, is the spring of all action; and for the gratification of this desire, the works and government of God, and the whole system of human duties, are admirably and harmoniously adapted.

9. The constitution of human feelings is such, that some things are naturally agreeable to them, and others are disagreeable. Virtue, beauty, order, utility, prosperity, general happiness, public approbation, &c. belong to the first class; and vice, deformity, disorder, mischief, decay, gen-

5. Of what does the primary class of operations consist?
6. What is meant by the term feeling?
7. Is feeling an essential quality of mind?
8. What does feeling incline us to make?
9. What is the constitution of feeling?

eral suffering, public disapprobation, &c. to the latter. If we inquire why these things are agreeable or disagreeable, the only answer that can be given is, they are *naturally* so. The feelings of the mind are often modified by reflection, and extraneous causes; and their whole character is more or less affected by the connexion of soul and body. The dissimilarity of the intellects, passions and appetites of different individuals, is doubtless owing to the peculiarities of their temperament, organic structure, and other external causes.

1. *Instincts* are modifications of feeling, produced by a particular organic structure, inclining its subjects to do certain things in a particular way. If infants are prompted to seek nourishment from their mother's breast by a particular process, they are thus prompted by their feelings; and those feelings are excited and governed by organic laws.

2. *Benevolence*, or a feeling which prompts us to relieve suffering, is a natural operation of the mind; but it is often, if not always, modified by reflection and external causes. In deciding the character of this feeling, around which metaphysicians have thrown so much difficulty, the question is, not whether we actually promote our happiness by acts of kindness, or whether, in any degree, we intend the accomplishment of this object; but, simply, whether a desire to relieve an object of distress from suffering, is a natural feeling or not. Viewing the question in this light, we have no hesitancy in believing it to be *natural*; though, like every other feeling, it may be subject to the modifying influence of extraneous causes. An individual, on beholding an object of distress, *instantly* feels a desire to relieve him; and though a variety of circumstances may concur in heightening

1. What are instincts?

2. What is benevolence?

or depressing the feeling, it certainly originated in his organization, and is, therefore, *natural*.

3. *Perception* is that action of the mind by which we become acquainted with external objects. We perceive, what is called a house, a man, a river, a landscape, in consequence of certain external objects being properly presented to our organs of sensation.

4. Between *perceptions* and *sensations* there is this difference: the latter "are those states of mind, which immediately succeed the changes of state, produced in any of our organs of sense, by the presence of external objects: the former are the references we make of our sensations to something external as the cause of them. When we smell a rose, for instance, the smell is the sensation, and the perception is the reference we make of this sensation to the rose, as the cause of the smell."*

5. Perception is distinct from feeling. The former modifies the latter, but does not create it. An individual may have perception without feeling; and feeling without perception. We, for instance, can perceive the lines of a geometrical figure without feeling; and a fœtus may feel without perception.

6. *Memory* is that action of the mind which retains ideas it had previously acquired. How this process is conducted we are unable to explain. The doctrine of phantasms, as advocated by ancient philosophers, and many other theories, of later times, are all obnoxious to unanswerable objections; and in this, as well as in many other instances, we are compelled to believe the fact without understanding the process.

3. What is perception?

4. What is the difference between perceptions and sensations?

5. Is perception different from feeling?

6. What is memory?

* Dr. Brown.

7. We have called the memory a simple act; because it seems to be distinct from all others. It is not feeling; for we remember curves, parallels, and other figures, which we drew in our younger days, without the least feeling; nor is it perception: for we often remember circumstances which have long since passed beyond the cognizance of our senses. These actions of the mind, do undoubtedly, upon the principle of association, often assist in recollecting past events; but the operation of recording and retaining ideas, is an act distinct from both. The mind, in its connexion with the body, is so constructed that it naturally possesses more or less tenacity for ideas already acquired; and this tenacity we call memory.

8. Our inborn feelings, and the powers of perception and memory, constitute, in our view, the elements of mind; and afford an ample explanation of the origin of every species of knowledge and emotion that human beings are capable of possessing.

9. From these simple or primary actions of the mind, a secondary or compound class of acts is formed. This formation is the *necessary effect* of the primary actions, and consists of desire, aversion, judgment, conscience, will, &c.

1. *Desire* and *aversion* are formed by feeling and perception. The qualities of some things are naturally agreeable to the feelings; and those of others disagreeable; the former produce desire, and the latter aversion.

2. In looking upon objects and their effects, we not unfrequently perceive, or think we perceive, something conducive to our happiness; this excites a desire to obtain them. In

7. Is memory a simple act?

8. What are the elements of the mind?

9. What are formed by the simple actions of the mind?

1. How are desire and aversion formed?

2. How is this subject illustrated?

others we perceive, or think we perceive, qualities or circumstances tending to our misery; this produces an aversion to them. Things which are good, or apparently good, excite desire; and things which are evil, or apparently evil, aversion. The passions and appetites are only modifications of desire and aversion. Objects of desire excite the benevolent and complacent affections, and objects of aversion the malevolent and disgustful passions.

3. *Judgment* is the effect of perception and memory. After comparing the qualities and circumstances of different objects, we form an opinion concerning their agreement or disagreement; and this opinion is judgment. It implies the action of perception, and not unfrequently of memory. To form a decision upon any subject, a perception of its qualities and circumstances are indispensable; and this process, in many instances, necessarily requires recollection.

4. *Conscience* is the united action of feeling and perception, in reference to moral subjects. So far as it is purely natural, it consists simply of a perception of what is right and wrong, and of feelings in consonance with the former, and in dissonance to the latter. The elements of this faculty, or what we have denominated feeling and perception, are purely natural; but the right improvement of those elements is adventitious. A natural conscience, and a good conscience, correctly speaking, are phrases of different import. Every rational being is, more or less, in possession of a natural conscience, that is, a perception of, and a sensibility to virtue; but few, comparatively speaking, are in possession of a good conscience; that is, of a perception and sensibility in reference to moral things, duly regulated by reason and revelation.

That mankind are naturally competent to perceive the propriety and fitness of moral things, (especially with the as-

3. What is judgment?

4. What is conscience?

sistance of revelation,) is a position too evident to require proof, and that they are naturally possessed of feelings in harmony with such propriety, when properly perceived, is equally evident. "This commandment," said God to the Hebrews, "which I command thee this day, is not *hidden* from thee, neither is it *far off*: it is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, who shall go up for us to heaven and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? But the word is *very nigh* unto thee, in thy *mouth*, and in thy *heart*, that thou mayest do it."* Whatever may be the degradation of human nature, it is clear from the whole history of man, that his sober judgment and natural feelings approve of moral rectitude, if not in his own case, at least in that of others. Never did the judgment and feelings of a rational human being approve vice when properly presented to his view; or repudiate virtue, when exhibited in her native aspects. The approval of the first, or the condemnation of the second, is not, in any instance, the necessary result of human organization; but of its perversion by the superinduced influence of ignorance, prejudice, and error. God, in the formation of human nature, created principles, whose natural tendency is to recognize and approve virtue; and those principles are the inborn feelings of the soul, and its power of perception.

5. Conscience being thus engrafted upon the constitution of human nature, is designed to be the expositor of human duty. Notwithstanding its decisions are not infallible; nor its authority ultimate; yet are its dictates entitled to great respect. We are always bound to act in conformity with the decisions of our conscience; for although these decisions

5. What is the design of conscience?

* Deut. 30: 11—14—See Rom. 2: 14, 15.

are often wrong, yet, as we believe them to be right, our acting in contradiction to them would result from a repugnance to an admitted duty, and this repugnance would be criminal notwithstanding our conduct, in the abstract, might be right. The guilt of acting in conformity with a wrong conscience arises, more from a negligence in forming that conscience, than it does from acting in conformity with it after it is formed.

6. The human conscience, abstractedly considered, is a natural capacity for forming right notions on moral subjects; and this capacity we are bound by the most solemn obligations to improve. Acting as we necessarily must, upon the decisions of our own conscience, as being to us the arbiter of right and wrong, it is obviously a duty of the first importance to see that that arbiter be duly informed.

7. That the dictates of conscience are not infallible; nor its authority ultimate, is evident from the discrepancy of its decisions, and from the circumstance that individuals who have grown up without instruction have little or no conscience. In order to bring it to maturity, this faculty, like every other action of the mind, must be subjected to exercise and discipline. The taste of Raphael, Michael Angelo, and Praxiteles, existed in them naturally; but its development and gradual approximation to perfection depended on their efforts to improve it. So a good conscience, consists not of a simple and independent faculty dictating with infallible certainty what is right and wrong; but of sound feelings and a correct judgment, improved by reflection and the word of God.

8. The *will*, or the power of choosing and refusing, is a modification of desire founded on feeling and perception. In any range of choice we always select those objects, which, upon the whole, we think will contribute most to our happi-

6. Are we under obligations to improve our conscience?

7. Are the dictates of the conscience infallible?

8. What is the will?

ness, or least to our misery. This is a fundamental law of our nature. Volition, or the act of willing, is always in accordance with our own feelings and perceptions, and is, in this respect, perfectly free. Whatever may be the character of our choices, they are the spontaneous result of our own mental condition. A coerced will, or a choice in repugnance to this condition, is impossible. A higher degree of liberty than a freedom to follow the suggestions of his own feelings and perceptions, no created being can possess; and a less degree would be inconsistent with responsibility and probation. The infinitely diversified combinations of internal and external influences, have thrown around the operations of the will inscrutable perplexities, and we must be satisfied with the assurance of scripture and experience, that while we are infinitely *dependent*, we are, in our volitions, perfectly *free*.

9. The *imagination* consists of the combination of feeling and perception; and is the power of presenting things in a new and singular way; or of giving to old facts a new dress. This operation of the mind not unfrequently combines all its primary and simple actions. In giving fictitious colourings to past events it is obvious the memory, as well as the feeling and perception, is employed.

1. *Genius* is chiefly the result of feeling and perception. An individual possesses a genius for music, architecture, and painting; because the actions of his mind have predisposed and adapted him to these pursuits. Genius, strictly speaking, is a special aptitude for certain things, induced by a peculiar modification of the mental and bodily powers.

2. *Taste* is a perception of, and a sensibility to the beauties of nature and art. Delicacy of feeling and accuracy of perception, constitute in perfection this important and pleasing faculty.

9. What is the imagination?

1. What is genius?

2. What is taste?

3. By a combination of the primary and secondary actions of the mind, *under the influence of external circumstances*, certain feelings and principles are superinduced, which, on account of their complicated nature, and the character of the agents employed in their formation, have been denominated *adventitious*. The principal of these are, habit, patriotism, parental affection, filial affection, fraternal affection, &c.

4. *Habit* is the effect of memory and feeling, cherished under particular circumstances.

5. *Patriotism* is compounded of self-love and benevolence; and is graduated in its intensity by reflection, and the condition of our country.

6. *Parental affection*, filial affection, &c., are compounded of the same qualities; but exist in a higher degree, owing to the greater frequency of their occurrence, and the diminished extent of their operation.

7. From the nature of man we will proceed to deduce his relations. As the systematic adaptation of things necessarily form a relation between them, we arrive at a knowledge of the latter by ascertaining the former. In examining, for instance, the solar system, and learning the elements of its component parts, we perceive immediately the relations in which they stand to one another. We see that the secondaries sustain to the primaries a different relation from what they do to one another; and that the secondaries are to the primaries, in many respects different from what the primaries are to the sun. So by ascertaining the adaptations of man

3. What is formed by a combination of the primary and secondary actions of the mind?

4. What is habit?

5. What is patriotism?

6. What are parental affection, filial affection, &c.

7. From what do we deduce the relations of man?

to the universe, and of the universe to man, we discover the relations they bear to one another.

8. Man, in the first place, is a *creature*.

9. This is evident from the fact of his composition. If man were homogeneous in his nature, his eternal existence would be more probable than it is; but being a compound of very different ingredients, his creation is certain. The elements of a composition *must* be in a simple state before they are united; else an effect will exist before its cause. Composition implying the union of different substances, the combination of those substances must be subsequent to the beginning of their elementary condition. If the elements did not exist previous to their combination, how could they have been combined? To say that a compound existed before its component parts were in being is a contradiction in terms.

1. The unceasing tendency of man to dissolution, likewise proves him to be a creature. Were his nature uncreated and eternal, it would not be subject to decay. That which has subsisted from eternity must be immortal in its nature. The eternity which is future is no longer than the eternity which is past; and that which could resist decay in the latter period, will likewise resist it in the former. But man, alas! is hastening to the dust. He is of few days and full of trouble; he cometh up in the morning and is cut down before the evening.* Surely, that which is so transitory in its nature cannot have existed from eternity.

2. But that human beings are not eternal, is a position which needs not the aid of reason to demonstrate. Our progress from infancy, within our own remembrance

8. What is man in the first place?

9. Which is the first argument to prove this?

1. What is the next argument to prove that man is a creature?

2. What facts prove man to be a creature?

* Job. 14 ch.

proves we had a beginning; and this fact is corroborated by the record of our birth, and the testimony of our parents.

3. Man being a creature, he is necessarily *dependent*.

4. Passive and unconscious as he was in his creation, he received what was *given* him, and no more; and for the *continuance* of the gift he is dependent on the giver. To the primary cause of being, man, like every other creature, is indebted for all that he now enjoys, or ever did enjoy. In the strong and expressive language of inspiration, "in him he lives, and moves, and has his being."^{*}

5. And while he is thus dependent upon the origin of all things, he is, in a secondary sense, dependent on every thing with which he is connected. Man is one link in the great chain of existence, and he is dependent on every other link, for the accomplishment of his destiny. In the vast and complicated machinery of the universe there is nothing superfluous; nothing insubordinate; but every thing, however insignificant, is essential to the whole; and of that whole, God is the supreme director.

6. Man also is a *social* creature. The circumstances of his condition, and the constitution of his nature, all incline him to the social state; and this state is contributive alike to his own happiness, and to the general welfare.

7. Standing as he does in these relations, he is evidently *responsible*: responsible to his creator, benefactor, and governor, and also to his fellow-creatures.

8. Some, indeed, believing the universe to be under the dominion of *fate*, and every action the result of necessity, con-

3. What other relation does man sustain?

4. How is the dependence of man proved?

5. On what is man dependent besides God?

6. What other relation does man sustain?

7. Is man a responsible creature?

8. What is the opinion of some on this subject?

Acts 17: 28.

tend that man is not, and cannot be responsible for his conduct. And if the premises be true, the conclusion necessarily follows. Where there is no power there can be no responsibility. Accountability for actions, over which we have no control, is a solecism alike apparent to reason and to common sense. But of the incorrectness of the premises we have no doubt. The dogmas of fatality originated in the errors of paganism, and have long since been invalidated by reason and revelation.

9. God not only called man into being, but possessed him with reason and immortality. He stamped upon him, in the process of creation, the features of his own mind, and adapted him, in all respects, to the purposes of moral government. Fitted by the attributes of his nature for a discipline of this description, he cannot be irresponsible for his conduct.

1. Nor has God bestowed on human beings only reason and immortality, but also every other blessing, suitable to their condition, and the promotion of their happiness. In the most impressive and effective manner, he has revealed to them the objects of their faith; has sent his son to exemplify, in his life and conversation, the requirements of his law; to make, in the sacrifice of the cross, an ample and full atonement for their sins; to secure to them the aid and comfort of his spirit; and to render the dispensations of his providence subservient to their present and eternal interests. In the possession of these blessings, nothing, certainly, can be more proper than that man should be held accountable to his benefactor for his conduct.

2. The importance of the doctrine of human responsibility proves it to be a reality. Were this article stricken from our creed, the result would be infinitely mischievous. The dread of a future retribution, which now restrains the con-

9. What is the first argument to prove man responsible?

1. What is the second argument to prove man responsible?

2. What is the third argument to prove man responsible?

duct of human beings, would, in this event, be done away. The efficiency of human laws, and the influence of social life, being thus divested of their greatest power, crime would universally prevail. So intimately connected with the well-being of society is a belief in the doctrine of responsibility, that no community has ever flourished without it. Pagans, in their deepest degradation, have had their tribunals in another world, before which they were to be judged according to their doings in the present life. And if this belief, in all its modifications, were expunged from the human mind, an utter recklessness of propriety, and moral conduct, would ensue. Chaos would come again, and every man would do as seemeth good in his own eyes.

3. A belief which is so essential to the public welfare, must be true. There never can exist a reason for acting upon a principle which is false. The supposition that fiction, in any instance, is necessary to govern the world, is in derogation from him who made it. That which is rendered important by the constitution of human beings to be believed, must be worthy of belief; and nothing can be worthy of belief but what is true.

4. Nor is the doctrine of a responsible hereafter, less consistent with the common sense of mankind than it is with their interest. Under some modification or other the doctrine has been believed by all people, in all ages. It is written by the finger of God upon the living tablet of every heart. It exists among the inhabitants of the polar regions, the uncultivated tenants of negro hamlets, the lofty mountains of Tibet, and the lowly vallies of Hindostan, as well as among those of Jewish and christian countries. Co-extensive with human nature is a belief of future retribution. This belief is so natural to the mind of man, that neither the ravages of time, nor the wastes of accident, have been able to destroy

3. What is the fourth argument to prove man responsible ?

4. What is the fifth argument to prove man responsible ?

it. Notwithstanding six thousand years have passed away, and the ebb and flood of life have been continually altering the face of nature;—although numerous and powerful agents have been unceasingly operating on the character of human beings; and have, in the lapse of time, thrown them into every conceivable variety of situation prejudicial to this sentiment, it has remained unimpaired to the present moment. Nor is it ever lessened by the approach of death. Though amid the business, amusements, and tumults of the present life, the sentiment not unfrequently becomes inoperative; yet in the silence of solitude, under the dispensations of affliction, and, above all, in the view of death, it is sure to revive, and disclose itself. Reason, feeble as her vision is, looks beyond the grave, and sees, or thinks she sees, in “that bourne from which no traveller returns,” a condition of rewards and punishments.

5. The scriptures, upon this subject, speak with a perspicuity worthy of its importance. They dissipate every cloud; clear up every doubt; and impress upon the mind a full conviction of its truth. Every precept of the decalogue; every ordinance of the Jewish ritual; every promise of the gospel, and every denunciation of the law, is based upon the accountability of man. In the extinction of this doctrine the scriptures become a mass of dogmas, without order, and without force. They lose every particle of vitality, and dwindle to a code of ethics, destitute alike of sanctions and of power. “We must all,” they tell us, “appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.”* “And the time is coming, and now is, when they that are dead shall hear the voice of the son of man, and come forth; they that have done good to the resur-

5. What is the sixth argument to prove man responsible?

* 2 Cor. 5:10.

rection of life, and they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation.”*

6. The solemn and infinitely interesting doctrine of a future judgment is dwelt upon in the holy scripture with a plenitude and emphasis not to be misapprehended. “These,” said Jèsus Christ, referring to the transactions of the last day, “shall go away into *everlasting punishment*, but the righteous into *life eternal*.”† The nature and duration of these rewards and punishments ought to be most seriously and attentively considered. Forming motives as they do to conduct in the present life, they lie at the basis of all morals.

7. “Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth: yea, saith the spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.”‡

8. The ample and positive benedictions of their heavenly father rest upon “the dead, who die in the Lord,” from HENCEFORTH:—from the very moment of their dissolution, through all the coming ages of eternity. The supposition that the soul, when separated from the body, lapses into a quiescent state, is flatly contradicted in the holy scriptures. “*To day*,” said Jesus Christ to the penitent thief, “shalt thou be with me in Paradise.”§ And said the apostle Paul, “I am in a straight betwixt two, having a desire to depart and to *be with Christ*, which is far better.|| Nor is this position less accordant with reason than it is with revelation. Why should the father of spirits permit the human mind, on being separated from the body, to sink into a state of quiescence? How can that which is immaterial, immortal, and

6. How is the doctrine of a future judgment represented in the scripture?

7. What is said of the reward of the righteous?

8. How is this illustrated?

* John 5:25, 28, 29. † Mat. 25:46. ‡ Rev. 14:13.

§ Luke 23:43. || Phil. 1:23.

essentially conscious, pass into a state of non-existence? Why should a living being, reconciled to its creator, by the blood of Christ, and made a participant of "the blessings of the gospel of the grace of God," be thrown, for the lapse of ages, into a state of unconsciousness? Such a thing cannot be. It is alike repugnant to reason and to revelation. "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from *henceforth*: for they rest from their labours, and their works do follow them."

9. The images, intended in the holy scriptures to illustrate the nature of the christian's life in the present world, often represent it as a state of *labour*. "*Strive*," it is said, "to enter in at the straight gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." But the christian's toil, severe and protracted as it often is, will not endure for ever. From the moment of his dissolution he will rest from his labours. Leaving far behind him the toils and sorrows of this transitory world, he will be admitted to the enjoyment of that repose, which time nor circumstance can ever affect. God will wipe away all tears from his eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things will have passed away, and all things become new.*

1. Nor will he simply rest from his labours; but his works will follow him. His history will unfold to his delighted eyes, a catalogue of works, sanctified by grace, and rendered acceptable to God by the merits of the cross. His piety, benevolence, and self-denial, will shine upon the records of eternity with infinitely greater splendour, than the brightest achievements of worldly men, though celebrated by the

9. What images are used in scripture to represent the christian's life in the present world?

1. What privilege, besides resting from their labours, will the righteous enjoy in another life?

* Rev. 21:4.

tongue of eloquence, or the pen of poetry. Precious will be the recollection of the fact, "that when the ear heard him, it blessed him; because he delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to deliver him. That the blessing of him that was ready to perish, came upon him, and he caused the widow's heart to sing for joy—that he put on righteousness and it clothed him; that his judgment was a robe and a diadem—that he was eyes to the blind, and feet was he to the lame; that he was a father to the poor, and the cause which he knew not he searched out."*

2. And while the remembrance of obedience in the present life, will be to the christian in that which is to come, a source of the sweetest comfort, his works will follow him for another purpose. "By thy words," said Jesus Christ, "thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."† The works of the true believer, summoned to the judgment seat, at the final audit, will be the evidence of his acquittal. "Well done thou good and faithful servant," will be the language of the judge, "thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."‡ This will be the consummation of his hopes; the realization of his highest wishes. To enter into the kingdom of his Lord; to participate the incorruptible inheritance of the saints in light; to be admitted to the presence of him, where there is fulness of joy; and to his right, where there are pleasures forever more—will be all—all that he can desire.

3. Could we draw aside the curtain of mortality, and disclose the circles of the just made perfect, around the throne of God, clad in robes of unspotted light, casting their crowns

2. What other privilege will the righteous enjoy in another life?

3. What would be the effect of beholding the condition of the righteous in another life?

* Job 29. † Mat. 12: 37. ‡ Mat. 25: 21.

at Jehovah's feet, and sweeping with the sublimest touches their golden harps, in praise to him, who had loved them, and washed them in his own blood, and made them kings and priests to God and his father, we should exclaim—"verily, there is a reward for the righteous."*

4. But while, in the language of an apostle, "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man to conceive" the blessedness, reserved in heaven for the just; a far different destiny awaits the impenitent. "What," says Jesus Christ, "is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his soul?"† The answer is, he is not only not profited, but absolutely ruined. From the inability of the world to make us happy, on the one hand; and the uncertain tenure by which we hold it on the other, it is evident the acquisition of its whole treasure would be infinitely inadequate to compensate for the loss of the soul. This loss does not consist, as some imagine, simply, in the extinction of existence; but in its perpetuation, under circumstances of suffering. To be annihilated at death, would, indeed, be a disaster, for the endurance of which, the possession of the world, during the brief period of our existence, would be utterly insufficient to remunerate. But abhorrent to the human mind as annihilation is, it is infinitely less so than the loss of the soul. Be our disposition to fritter away the sanctions of the divine government what it may, it is a truth, clear as it is terrible, that the punishment of the finally impenitent will not be bounded by the limits of mortality, but will be commensurate with the being of him who made us. It is impossible, in consulting the holy scriptures upon this topic, not to perceive, in the clearest terms, the doctrine of eternal punishment. If this doctrine be not correct, the scriptures, of all writings, are the least definite and true.

4. What destiny awaits the wicked in another world?

* Ps. 58: 11.

† Mat 16: 26.

We must suppose, in this event, they were intended merely to stimulate the imagination, in the invention of fictitious systems, instead of disclosing rules for the government of our faith and practice. But this supposition, controverting as it does the credit of divine revelation, must be rejected by every individual subscribing to the scriptures as the word of God.

5. It is true, the doctrine of eternal punishment is highly repulsive to the carnal mind; and, perhaps, by the unassisted light of reason, can hardly be reconciled to the attributes of God. Still, however, it is a doctrine revealed in the holy scriptures, and claims, on that account, our unqualified belief. God having revealed to us all that is necessary to know, has annexed to this revelation the assurance that he that believeth *not* shall be DAMNED.* The scriptures, as well as the light of reason, were designed to be our instructor; and it is incumbent on us to receive them with implicit confidence. In doing this it will be impossible to believe the loss of the human soul implies either a limited duration of punishment, or its annihilation at death. We are told that in the resurrection, “many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.”†

6. The loss of the soul implies—a banishment from the presence of him who made us—the reproaches of a guilty conscience—a rapid and unceasing progression in moral turpitude—the positive inflictions of divine justice—and absolute despair.

7. St. Paul, in speaking of the punishment of the finally impenitent, says, “they shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the *presence of the Lord*, and from the glory of his power.‡ Nor is it possible for immortal spirits to de-

5. Should we believe the doctrine of eternal punishment?

6. What is implied in the loss of the soul?

7. How is a banishment from the divine presence proved?

* Mark 16:16.

† Dan. 12:2.

‡ 2 Thes. 1:9.

rive, from any circumstance, greater anguish than from this. God is to the moral world what the sun is to the natural. Were we excluded from the cheering influence of the latter, all would become to us dreariness and death. The softest climates and the most productive soils, suffering a privation of this description, would soon be converted into polar darkness and everlasting solitude. What, then, is the condition of immortal spirits, banished from the fountain of their being, to some distant and dreary world, where their aching eyes can never catch even a wandering ray of the divine glory? To know that God is the centre of all goodness; that in his presence there is fulness of joy, and that at his right hand there are pleasures for evermore; and that from this delightful scene they are forever excluded, cannot fail to produce unutterable woe. If an exilement from our native country is often deemed an occurrence as terrible as death, how much more intolerable must an exclusion from the father of spirits be? To be driven to the utmost limits of creation; to be wrapped in darkness impervious to the light of heaven, and doomed to sustain the frowns and curses of him who gave them being, will be productive of a state of suffering, the severity of which transcends the power of language to describe.

8. To this will be added the reproaches of a guilty conscience. The lost will recollect the many and exalted privileges they had once enjoyed, and their criminal misimprovement of them all. The atonement of the son of God, the strivings of the holy spirit, the institutions of the christian church, and all the blessings of the present life, will appear like injured spectres, sternly demanding reparation for their wrongs. The reproaches of a guilty conscience, in the present life, are represented, in the word of God, by the gnawings of a worm that never dies. And if the reality be like the image, nothing can be more dreadful. A rapacious

8. What next is implied in the loss of the soul?

worm, gnawing upon the fibres of the heart, would soon produce a state of suffering beyond the endurance of mortal strength. But this, and more than this, is comprehended in the reproaches of a guilty conscience. A combination of sufferings can never exist in greater vividness than under the pressure of calamities which might have been avoided, but which were brought upon us by our own folly. It is this that turns the mortal arms of conscience upon itself, and gives a pungency to its recriminations, which none but disembodied spirits can endure.

9. Besides the reproaches of a guilty conscience, the loss of the human soul implies a rapid and unceasing progression in moral turpitude. Bad as sinners in the present life may be, they are capable of becoming immeasurably worse in that which is to come. When banished from the presence of him who made them; abandoned forever by the holy spirit, and surrounded by offenders of the deepest die, they will recede from the standard of moral purity with a rapidity of which we now can form no conception. Human beings are prompted to the pursuit of virtue chiefly by the hope of happiness; but when this hope becomes extinct, the power, and even the desire for improvement, will cease to operate. In this condition, all the propensities of their fallen nature will rage without control. Their bosom will be the seat of unceasing strife, occasioned by the conflict of unholy passions, each one striving for the victory, but no one succeeding in its effort; and by the rage of these lawless elements, their subjects will contract deeper and yet deeper corruption in every successive stage of their interminable apostacy.

1. And what can be more abhorrent to the reflecting mind than a degradation like this? Even in the present life, the existence and collision of unholy passions are often productive of painful agitations; but this is nothing, in comparison

9. What next is implied in the loss of the soul?

1. What is the consequence of a progression in moral turpitude?

with those tremendous paroxysms, which are produced by the conflict of passions, steeped in the corruption of unnumbered ages. The simple thought of an interminable progression in moral turpitude, is, to a virtuous mind, intensely shocking; but when this thought is connected, as it must be, with increasing suffering, it becomes intolerable.

2. To this will be added the positive inflictions of divine justice. "If thy hand or thy foot offend thee, said Jesus Christ, cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than, having two hands or two feet, to be cast into *everlasting fire*."* Speaking of him who had neglected to improve his talent, he represents his judge as saying, "Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be *weeping and gnashing of teeth*."† And he represents the rich man as saying, "Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am *tormented in this flame*."‡

3. Nor can it be supposed that this description of the future sufferings of the impenitent contains the least exaggeration. It was given by him who possessed no disposition, unnecessarily, to alarm his creatures—by him who is the *faithful and true* witness—the same yesterday, to-day, and forever.

4. And to these ingredients of suffering, comprehended in the loss of the human soul, may be added *despair*. A cloud, unpenetrated by a single ray of hope, will hang forever upon the minds of the impenitent. To their aching eyes their sufferings will have no limits; but prospects of increasing sorrow will interminably stretch before. When, by the mightiest effort, they throw forward their imagination to the coming

2. What next is implied in the loss of the soul?

3. Is this description an exaggeration?

4. What next is implied in the loss of the soul?

* Mat. 18:8.

† Ib. 25:30.

‡ Luke 16:24.

ages of futurity, and extend their computation far beyond the grasp of human thought, instead of arriving at a limit, they will still find themselves upon the bosom of an ocean, which, rolling on its eternal surges, appears equally without a bottom or a shore. Were they cheered by the most distant hope; did they anticipate deliverance after the lapse of as many millions of ages as there are atoms in the universe, they would find some alleviation; but, alas! they read upon the dark scroll of their revolting destiny a duration infinitely outstretching this. Should they, from the intensity of their sufferings, involuntarily exclaim, "When! O, when! shall these afflictions end?" the genius of despair, in tones destructive to every hope, would reply, "Never, never, never!"

5. Of all the ingredients of future punishment, despair seems to be the climax. Every thing besides may possibly admit of some alleviation. Even a banishment from him who made us—the reproaches of an angry and guilty conscience—a progression in moral turpitude—and the operation of consuming fire, may contain some mitigating circumstance; some degree of punishment less than we could endure—but in despair there is none. It fills our cup to overflowing, and produces that intensity of suffering which is bounded only by our capacity to endure. If hope deferred maketh the heart sick, what may we not expect from its utter extinction? This is the last and greatest punishment that can be inflicted on human beings. To feel that they have fallen to rise no more; that their prospects of future happiness are forever blasted—that henceforth, whatever may be the enjoyment of others, they must be the victims of punishment—constitute the severest affliction they can endure. This is, at once, the exhaustion of the last particle of consolation; the entire extinction of their final hopes; the perfect and complete destruction of *all* but the *suffering* of their souls.

5. What is the climax of future punishment?

From this analysis of human nature may be derived many important deductions in reference to our duty. Of those deductions we will avail ourselves in the following book.

BOOK III.

Of the several duties which we owe to God, to our fellow creatures, and to ourselves.

1. From the fact that man is rewardable and punishable in another world, for his conduct in the present, the question arises, “ what actions are *rewardable*, and what are *punishable*?” To solve the question, reference must be made to the intentions and character of his sovereign.

2. In looking at the works of God, in reference to human beings, we discover goodness, in the brightest colours, stamped upon them all. The intention of the Almighty to promote the well-being of his sentient creatures is apparent, not only in the arrangement of a few circumstances, but in the whole economy of nature. The more profoundly and philosophically we inquire into the phenomena and laws of the universe, the more thoroughly we shall be convinced of the correctness of this statement. The physico-theological researches of learned men, have thrown open to our view a boundless and brilliant field of useful and consoling knowledge. “ Is there,” says Dr. Prout, “ a human being who can witness the splendid colouring of the atmosphere above him by the setting sun; who can witness the beauty and endless variety of tint displayed by every object of the landscape around him, down to the minutest insect, or flower, or pebble at his feet; who is conscious of the pleasure he derives from

1. What arises from the fact that man is rewardable and punishable in another world?

2. What do we discover in the works of God?

these objects, and who reflects that this pleasure was not necessary to his existence, and might have been withheld? Is there, we ask, a human being who duly considers all these things, and who will dare to assert that the being who made them all is not benevolent?"*

3. Upon this, and upon every other subject of the kind, the declarations of the holy scriptures are entirely consistent with the indications of nature. The Almighty proclaimed himself to Moses—"The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin."† The psalmist declares that God "is good to all, and that his tender mercies are over all his works."‡ And St. John emphatically asserts that "God is love."§

4. From the character and disposition of God, as indicated by the works of nature and of grace, we infer that those actions which are prompted by proper motives, and which tend to the promotion of human happiness, are *agreeable* to his will, and therefore *rewardable*; and that those actions, which are in contravention to this end, are *repugnant* to his will, and consequently *punishable*.

5. Confirmatory of this conclusion is the whole history of man. Malevolent actions have always tended to the misery of their perpetrators, and benevolent ones to the happiness of their performers. Rewards and punishments, in this respect; are not an arbitrary arrangement even of the divine being; but are founded upon the fitness of things resulting from the organization of the universe. The exercise of benevolence, according to the present order of things, as naturally tends to the happiness, and that of malevolence, to the misery of

3. Do the works of nature and the word of God agree in representing the character and dispositions of the divine being as benign?

4. What do we infer from the character and dispositions of God?

5. What is confirmatory of this conclusion?

* Bridgewater Treatise, p. 142. † Ex. 34: 6, 7. ‡ Ps. 145: 9. § 1 John 4: 8.

human beings, as a stone does to the centre, or free caloric to combustion. This law as essentially belongs to the moral world, as gravity does to the natural. Both principles are the ordinations of Deity, and are carried into effect for the preservation and government of the world. While nature lasts, and God retains dominion over the creatures of his own hands, benevolence will be rewarded, and malevolence punished. This rule, to which the divine being is impelled by his own nature to conform, is the grand conservatory principle of the universe. "All the law," saith an apostle, "is fulfilled in one word, namely, in LOVE."*

6. Benevolence, or a desire to promote the best interests of the universe, being the substance of human duties, we will proceed to consider its several modifications. These, for the sake of order, may be ranged under the following heads, namely, those which regard *God*—those which refer to our *fellow creatures*—and those which relate to *ourselves*.

CHAPTER I.

Of the duties which we owe to God.

7. The duties which we owe to God may be divided into *internal* and *external*.

8. The *internal* duties comprehend—investigation of his will—belief of his existence and the verity of his word—repentance for past sins—and acquiescence in his providence and laws.

9. The investigation of the will of God is a duty of the first importance; because the accomplishment of every other

6. What from these preliminaries shall we proceed to consider?

7. How may the duties which we owe to God be divided?

8. What do the *internal* duties comprehend?

9. Why is investigating the will of God a duty of the first importance?

* Gal. 5: 14.

duty depends upon the performance of this. The ascertainment of the nature and extent of any obligation will be impossible while we are ignorant of the will of God concerning it. Hence the requirement, "ye shall know that I am the *Lord your God*," is more frequently repeated in the holy scriptures, than almost any other.

1. Indicative of the obligation to investigate the will of God, he, in the organization of human nature, implanted in it a desire to perform the duty. To ascertain the origin and destination of man is an object of universal solicitude. From the dawn of reason to the approach of death this feeling seems to be an active and controlling quality. It is among the first that begins to operate, and will, certainly, be the last that will cease to exist.

2. Nor has God failed to furnish faculties for the gratification of this desire. By the judicious direction of our mental powers we may obtain, upon this point, the fullest satisfaction. Taking the light of nature and of revelation for our guide, we may learn all that our present, or future interest requires us to know. "The path of the just is like the shining light, which shineth brighter and brighter unto the perfect day."

3. The performance of this duty, like that of every other, contributes greatly to our happiness. The stupendous benignity of the will of God concerning us, more than any other subject, is calculated to gratify our feelings. It presents to us views of light, and themes of meditation, in comparison with which, every other topic dwindles into nothing. All that is exalting and gratifying to the intellect; all that is consolatory and cheering to the heart; and all that is adorn-

1. Which is the second argument to prove that we are bound to investigate the will of God?

2. Which is the third argument to prove we are bound to investigate the will of God?

3. Which is the fourth argument to prove we are bound to investigate the will of God?

ing and ennobling to the conduct, are developed in the purposes of God in the grandest and purest forms.

4. The *second internal* duty which we owe to God, is *belief* of his *existence* and his *word*.

5. This existence implies all the attributes of deity; or in other words, his eternity, self-existence, independence, omnipotence, omnipresence, omniscience, unchangeableness, and goodness.

6. The *eternity* of God follows from the fact that some things now exist, which did not always exist. As nothing could not have created something, the first cause of things *MUST* be eternal. Extended as may be the line of the secondary causes of creation, there is, inevitably, a *beginning* of the series; and to account for this beginning, we are compelled to have recourse to an eternal cause. The movement of the smallest particle in creation, implies a cause, and that cause, traced to its origin, *must* be from everlasting. Accordingly, the scriptures, in the fullest terms, ascribe to God the attribute of eternity. "The *eternal* God is thy refuge," said Moses, "and underneath are the everlasting arms."* "Before the mountains were brought forth," said David, "or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even *from everlasting to everlasting*, thou art God."†

7. If God is eternal, he is *self-existent*. Eternal existence implies being *before* creation; and that which was *before* creation, must be uncreated; and that which is not created must possess being in itself. Expressive of this attribute, said God to Moses, say unto the children of Israel, "*I am* hath sent me."‡ And St. John tells us he heard, in heaven,

4. Which is the second internal duty that we owe to God?

5. What does the divine existence imply?

6. How is the eternity of God proved?

7. How is the self-existence of God proved?

* Deut. 33: 27. † Ps. 90: 2. ‡ Exo. 3: 14.

a great voice, as a trumpet, saying, "I am *alpha* and *omega*, the *first* and the *last*."*

8. God being self-existent, is necessarily *independent*. Having existed before all things, and possessing being in himself, he is not dependent on any thing. A cause cannot be dependent on effects produced by its own power; and if the *primary* cause is not dependent on effects produced by its own power, it is independent: for besides effects of this description there is nothing but itself. The psalmist says, "I know that the Lord is great, and that our Lord is above all Gods. Whatsoever the Lord pleaseth, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and in all deep places."† And God himself declares, "I am the first, and I am the last; and besides me there is no God."‡

9. From the independence of the Deity, his *omnipotence* necessarily follows. Independence implies the highest possible degree of power. The power of created agents inevitably depends upon the will of their creator; but if God is independent, he possesses a power superior to that of created agents; and consequently the highest possible degree of power. Independence, strictly speaking, implies a power not only superior to that of created agents, but absolute omnipotence. An independent being only can be the creator of all things; and the creator of all things must be the source of all power; and this source must necessarily be omnipotent. Accordingly, God said to Abraham, "I am the *Almighty* God: walk before me and be thou perfect."§ And the four beasts which are before the throne continually acclaim, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God *Almighty*, which was, and is, and is to come."||

1. God being omnipotent, is necessarily *omnipresent*. Om-

8. How is the independence of God proved?

9. How is the omnipotence of God proved?

1. How is the omnipresence of God proved?

* Rev. 1: 10, 11. † Ps. 135: 5, 6. ‡ Is. 44: 6. § Gen. 17: 1. || Rev. 4: 8.

nipotence implies power to do every thing; and if God has power to do every thing, he must be every where present. Where there is no presence there can be no agency. Extended as may be the actions of secondary agents, the energy of the primary one continues to the end of the series; producing the action of the last, no less really than that of the first. The use of intervening agents is merely to perpetuate the presence of the primary one. No agent has power to do every thing, unless it is every where present; but as God possesses power to do every thing, he is consequently omnipresent.

2. From the necessity of an eternal existence, the same inference inevitably follows. If God necessarily exists in any place, he must exist in every place. There is no reason why the existence of the Divine Being is more essential in one portion of the universe, than it is in every portion. The necessity of his being any where, proves that he is every where. Hence says the psalmist, "Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost part of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say surely the darkness shall cover me, even the night shall be light about me."* And God himself saith, "Do not I fill heaven and earth."†

3. If God be omnipresent, he is also *omniscient*. Being every where present, to him every thing must be known. Sustaining, directing, and controlling every atom of the universe as he does, nothing can escape his knowledge. "He that planted the ear shall he not hear? he that formed the

2. Which is the second argument to prove the omnipresence of God?

3. How is the omniscience of God proved?

* Ps. 139 : 7—11.

† Jer. 23 : 24.

eye, shall he not see?"* "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world."† "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight; but all things are naked and open unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do."‡

4. God being omniscient, he is necessarily *unchangeable*. Infinitely acquainted as he is with every thing, he can fall into no error; and if he falls into no error, there can be no change. "I am the Lord," saith he, "I change not."§ And saith an apostle, "Thou Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: they shall perish, but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old, as doth a garment; and as a vesture thou shalt fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the *same*, and thy years shall not fail."||

5. Such being the natural attributes of deity, he is necessarily *good*. His wisdom secures him from all error; his power from all weakness; and his steadfastness from all change. "Whatsoever things are *true*, whatsoever things are *honest*, whatsoever things are *just*, whatsoever things are *pure*, whatsoever things are *lovely*, and whatsoever things are of *good report*," meet in the divine character, in infinite plenitude.¶ "Unto thee, O Lord," saith the psalmist, "do I lift up my soul. For thou art *good*, and ready to forgive, and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee."**

6. But while God is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works, he is pre-eminently good to man. From the moment of his birth down to the period of his life, he is, in the economy of nature, provided with exhaustless comforts. While the food on which he lives imparts to him nourishment

4. How is the unchangeableness of God proved?

5. How is the goodness of God proved?

6. How is the goodness of God to man proved?

* Ps. 94: 9. † Acts 15: 18. ‡ Heb. 4: 13. § Mal. 3: 6. || Heb. 1: 10—11.

¶ Phil. 4: 8. ** Ps. 86: 5.

and strength, it ministers, in a high degree, to his happiness. The air with which he is surrounded is so adapted to his nature, that while it cheers and delights his spirits, it soothes and gratifies his feelings. The objects that are destined to meet his eye, the sounds that fall upon his ear, and the odours that reach his smell, are not unfrequently productive of the sweetest pleasure. All his senses, in their turn, revel in luxuries of the richest kind. Nor are his mental powers without enjoyment. Objects intended to exercise and strengthen his intellect; to warm and delight his fancy; to cheer and purify his heart; to elicit and ennoble his affections, are daily brought within his view. Even his afflictions are auxiliary to his interests. By exciting the sympathy of those around him; subduing the exuberance of his own feelings; and teaching him his dependence upon his heavenly benefactor, they prove to be rich and enduring benefits. Who, in the view of these things, does not exclaim with Paul, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"

7. The divine existence comprehends the subsistence of *three* persons in *one* essence.

8. The *unity* of the divine nature is not only corroborated by the whole phenomena of the universe, but is positively asserted in the holy scriptures. "Among the gods," saith the psalmist, there is none like unto thee, O Lord."* God himself saith, "I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me."† The first of the commandments is, "Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is *one Lord*."‡

9. While the unity of the divine essence is positively as-

7. What else does the divine existence imply?

8. How is the unity of the divine nature proved?

9. How is the plurality of persons in the godhead proved?

* Ps. 86:8.

† Is. 46:9.

‡ Deut. 6:4.

serted in the holy scriptures, the subsistence of a plurality of persons in this essence is stated with equal clearness. "God said let *us* make man in *our* image, after *our* likeness."* "Behold the man is become as one of *us*, to know good and evil."† "Let *us* go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech."‡

1. The phrase "BARA ELOHIM," "*the God's created,*" occurs more than thirty times in the short history of the creation. Nor is there, scarcely, a single form of speech, by which we might infer a plurality of persons in the godhead, that is not used, either by Moses in the Pentateuch, or by the other inspired writers in the Old Testament. A plural noun is joined to a singular verb: as, "*the Gods created* the heavens and the earth." A plural noun is joined to a plural verb: as, "*the Gods appeared* unto Jacob." A plural substantive is joined to a plural adjective: as, "ye cannot serve the Lord, for he is the *holy Gods.*" And to these passages may be added the phrase, "JEHOVAH ELOHIM," "*the Lord Gods,*" which occurs at least one hundred times in the law of Moses.§

2. As the scriptures of the Old Testament represent a plurality of persons in the divine essence, so the writings of the New limit this plurality to THREE.

3. "Go ye," said Jesus Christ, to his apostles, "and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the *Father*, and of the *son*, and of the *holy ghost.*"||

4. The gospel being a covenant between God and man, baptism is the ordinance by which it is ratified. This ordin-

1. What phrase, in proof of this point, frequently occurs?

2. In what part of the scriptures is this plurality limited to three?

3. How is this proved?

4. What inference is drawn from this authority?

* Gen. 1:26.

† Ib. 3:22.

‡ Ib. 11:7.

§ See Tomlin's Theology, and the Hebrew Bible. || Mat. 28, 19.

ance being a matter of divine appointment, is, of course, administered in the name of God; and Christ having directed it to be administered in the name of the Father, and of the son, and of the holy ghost, the conclusion is, each one is God. The supposition that the son, and the holy ghost, are merely operations or qualities of the Father, imputes unwarranted tautology to Jesus Christ, even in the institution of baptism. The word Father comprehending all the qualities and operations of his nature, it was unnecessary, after using that term, to add others, meaning only the same thing. Nor is the supposition that the son, and the holy ghost, are creatures, less objectionable. The uniting of created beings with the infinite and eternal Father, in the solemn and interesting ordinance of baptism, without the slightest intimation of a disparity existing between those persons, is, indeed, too monstrous to be credited a single moment. The inference then is, that the Father, and the son, and the holy ghost, are individual, or distinct persons in the godhead.

5. Corroborative of this deduction is the doxology, at the end of St. Paul's 2nd Epistle to the Corinthians. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the holy ghost, be with you all." In this passage the individuality, personality, and equality of the Father, son, and holy ghost, are expressed in the plainest terms. If they are not distinct, why are they separately enumerated? If they are not persons, why are they invoked to perform actions which persons only are competent to effect? And if they are not equal, why is not their disparity pointed out?

6. The salutation of St. John is another proof of the same kind. "Grace and peace," said he, "from him which is, and which was, and which is to come: and from the seven spirits which are before his throne, and from Jesus

5. What is corroborative of this inference?

6. What other proof have we of the same kind?

Christ.”* The father is here alluded to by terms denoting his eternity; the holy ghost, by an expression indicating the variety of his gifts, and Jesus Christ by his proper name.—From the fact that these persons are jointly, and without discrimination in respect to equality, the objects of apostolical invocation, the inference fairly is they are equally the supreme and eternal God. Scarcely is a single doctrine, exhibited in the writings of the new Testament, with greater perspicuity than the individuality and equality of the Father, son, and holy ghost. “There are three,” saith the apostle John, “that bear record in heaven, the Father, the son, and the holy ghost, and these three are one.”†

7. In the baptism of the saviour we have an exemplification of the same fact. We behold the son ascending the banks of Jordan, see the spirit descending on him like a dove, and hear a voice from heaven, saying, “This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased.”‡

8. The acts of personality attributed to Jesus Christ and the holy ghost, are also demonstrative of their individuality. “I will *pray* the Father,” said the redeemer, “and he shall give you another comforter, that he may abide with you forever, even the spirit of truth.”§ The affirmation that a quality or operation of the divine nature will *pray*, is, to say the least, a strange mode of expression. But the son not only says he will *pray*, but that he will pray *to* the Father; and if the Father is not distinct from the son, this mode of expression is still stranger. If, in every sense, they are the same, the act, alluded to by the saviour, is a prayer to himself. But that any being, whether human or divine, would present a petition to himself, is a supposition repug-

7. What have we in the baptism of the saviour?

8. What do the acts attributed to Jesus Christ and the holy ghost prove?

* Rev. 1:4, 5. † 1 John 5:7. ‡ Mat. 3:16, 17. § John 14:16, 17.

nant to common sense. Nor does the son only say he will pray to the Father, but that the Father shall *give* them another comforter, that he may abide with them forever. But will the Father *give*, or, as it is often expressed, *send* himself? Such language, surely, can never be attributed to him, of whom his enemies, even, said, "Never man spake like this man."

9. Expressions, distinctly recognizing the individuality of the Father, son, and holy ghost, occur frequently in the writings of inspiration. St. John tells us, that "*God* so loved the world that he *gave* his only begotten *son*, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."* And St. Paul declares that, "through Christ, we both have access by one spirit to the Father."† And a more distinct expression of the individuality of the blessed trinity is scarcely possible.

1. But the scriptures not only represent a trinity of persons in the godhead, but ascribe to each person an essential *equality*. The *same names*; the *same attributes*; the *same actions*; and the *same honours*, that are ascribed to *one*, are equally ascribed to *all*. Jesus Christ is called *God*—"In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was *God*."‡ So also is the holy ghost—"Why," said Peter to Ananias, "hath satan filled thine heart to lie to the holy ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto *God*."§ And St. Paul says, "The temple of *God* is holy, which temple ye are, and your bodies are the temple of the *holy ghost*."||

9. What expressions prove the individuality of the Father, son, and holy ghost?

1. What else do the scriptures ascribe to the Father, son, and holy ghost?

* John 3:16. † Eph. 2:18. ‡ John 1:1. § Acts 5:3, 4.

|| 1 Cor. 3:16, 17.

2. The inspired writers not only apply the same names to each individual of the trinity, but apply to each individual the *perfections* of the *Deity*. Jesus Christ is said to be *eternal*—"Before Abraham was, *I am*;"* to be *omnipotent*—"All power is given me in heaven and in earth;"† to be *omnipresent*—"Where two or three are gathered together in my name, *there am I* in the midst of them;"‡ to be *omniscient*—"He *knew all men*, and needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what is in man;"§ to be *unchangeable*—"Jesus Christ the *same yesterday, and to-day, and forever.*"|| Nor are these attributes ascribed only to the Father and the son, but likewise to the holy ghost. He is said to "*search all things, yea, the deep things of God*;"¶ to be *every where present*—"Whither," said the psalmist, "shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me;"** and he is said to "*proceed from the Father*,"†† and to be *the spirit of God*.‡‡

3. As the same names and the same attributes ascribed to the Father, are equally ascribed to the son, and the holy ghost, so are the same *actions*. "Know ye," saith the psalmist, "that the Lord he is God: it is he that hath *made us, and not we ourselves.*"§§ "By Jesus Christ," saith an apostle, "*were all things created.*"||| And Job saith, "The

2. What else do the scriptures apply to the Father, son, and holy ghost?

3. What else do the scriptures apply to the Father, son, and holy ghost?

* John 8:58. † Mat. 28:18. ‡ Ib. 18:20. § John 2:24.
 || Heb. 13:8. ¶ 1 Cor. 2:10. ** Ps. 139:7—12. †† John 15:26.
 ‡‡ Mat. 3:16. §§ Ps. 100:3. ||| Eph. 3:9.

spirit of God hath *made* me, and the breath of the Almighty hath *given me life.*”* “As the *Father* hath raised up the dead, and *quickeneth* them; even so the *son quickeneth* whom he will;”† “and it is the *spirit that quickeneth.*”‡ “There are diversities of gifts, but the same *spirit.* And there are differences of administrations, but the same *Lord.* And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same *God,* which worketh all in all.”§

4. And while the same actions are equally ascribed to each person in the trinity, the same *worship* is rendered to them all. We are *baptized* equally in the name of the Father, and the son, and the holy ghost;|| and St. Paul *prays* that “The grace of our *Lord Jesus Christ,* and the love of *God,* and the communion of the *holy ghost,* may be with us all.”¶ And St. John, addressing the seven churches which are in Asia, said, “Grace be unto you, and peace, from *him* which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the *seven spirits* which are before his throne; and from *Jesus Christ,* who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead.”***

5. The divine existence, then, comprehends the attributes of eternity, self-existence, independence, omnipotence, omnipresence, omniscience, immutability, and goodness; and in this existence subsists “The Father, and the son, and the holy ghost.” The son is God, but so only in connexion with the Father and the holy ghost; and the holy ghost is God, but so only in connexion with the Father and the son; and these three, though one in essence, are distinct in persons.

6. In the council of divine wisdom, for the redemption of

4. What else do the scriptures apply to the Father, son, and holy ghost?
5. What is the substance of the doctrine of the divine existence?
6. What offices have the son and the holy ghost assumed?

* Job. 33: 4. † John 5: 21. ‡ John 6: 63. § 1 Cor. 12: 4—6. || Mat-
thew 28: 19. ¶ 2 Cor. 13: 14. ** Rev. 1: 4, 5.

the world; the son assumed the offices of prophet, priest, and king; and the holy ghost that of the comforter and sanctifier of all who believe in Christ.

7. We are under obligations to believe the divine existence, first, because it is true; second, this belief is the only appointed instrument of our justification; third, it is the germ or principle of all virtue; fourth, it imparts to us a salutary influence; and fifth, it is required in the scriptures.

8. That we are under obligations to believe the existence of the divine being is evident from the fact that his existence is *true*. Obligations, we have said, are *reasons*; and nothing, surely, can be more reasonable than to believe truth; especially when that truth is presented in a strong light. Of the correctness of this statement there can be no doubt. It bears upon its very front the brightness of a primary principle.

9. Nor are its collateral circumstances unworthy of notice. The human mind, in its natural organization, is adapted to the performance of this action; and the interest and happiness of mankind depend on its accomplishment. In refusing to believe truth we rebel against the constitution and laws of our nature; set at defiance the fundamental principles of the divine government; erect an insuperable barrier to our own happiness; and act in contravention to the interests of the world.

1. A belief in the divine existence is the only instrument of our justification in the sight of God. "Being justified by faith," saith the apostle Paul, "we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."*

7. Are we under obligations to believe the divine existence?

8. What is the first reason for believing the divine existence?

9. What is the second reason for believing the divine existence?

1. What is the third reason for believing the divine existence?

* Rom. 5: 1.

2. That every human being, responsible to his Creator for his conduct, has rendered himself guilty by wicked works, is a position too evident to be denied. Where, we ask, is the individual who never departed from the law of his own nature? Who has met, in all his transactions, the approbation of his conscience? Who can say, from my youth up, I have conformed, in every instance, to all the relations and adaptations of my being? Alas! such a human creature does not exist. "There is none righteous," saith an apostle, "no, not one."*

3. How then, it may be asked, shall man be justified with God?

4. In attempting to solve this question many have supposed that justification before God is obtained by good works. This, however, is not true. Not only are our supposedly good works inadequate to atone for past delinquencies; but they are, in themselves, the cause of guilt. There is, in our best performances, so great a want of perfectness; such a mixture of impurity; such a dereliction from the standard of natural and christian rectitude, that a reliance on their expiatory efficacy is wholly without reason.

5. Even, however, in the supposition that our good works are perfect, they cannot atone for past sins. In doing all we can do, we do no more than our *present* duty; and, consequently, the amount of past delinquencies is yet uncanceled. Should an individual, who had long lived in the performance of his social duties, in some unguarded moment, yielding to the propensities of his fallen nature, commit felony; should he be arrested, arraigned, and put upon his trial, his overt act proved, and he pronounced guilty; it would be in vain for

2. How is the guilt of human beings proved?

3. What question arises from these premises?

4. How is this question attempted to be solved by some?

5. Can good works atone for past sins?

* Rom. 3:10.

him to plead the innocence of his past life; to say that since the fatal deed, he has been blameless, and that henceforth he intends to live without offence. He is pronounced guilty by his country's laws. The damning charge is fixed upon his conscience and his character, and all that he ever did, or can do, is not sufficient to blot it out. This, precisely, is our case. "We have all sinned and come short of the glory of God;"* "and by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified."†

6. Convinced of the impossibility of obtaining justification by the merit of good works, many seek it conjointly in the grace of God, and the performance of moral duties. Believing that God is merciful, they hope that after doing all they can do, he will do the rest; that notwithstanding the imperfectness of their past obedience, he will, considering the sincerity of their intentions, not be strict to mark their iniquities; but that, in the plenitude of goodness, he will blot them out. Against this system of compromise, however, St. Paul directs his most powerful reprehensions. "If," says he, "salvation be of grace, then it is no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace; otherwise work is no more work."‡

7. How, then, the question recurs, can man be justified with God? St. Paul answers, "a man is justified by faith and not by works."§ "That by grace we are saved through *faith*; and that not of ourselves; it is the gift of God."|| And saith the protestant episcopal church, "We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by *faith*; and not for our own works or deservings. Wherefore that we are justified by *faith only*, is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort."¶

6. How is justification sometimes sought?

7. What then recurs?

* Rom. 3:23. † Rom. 3:20. ‡ Rom. 11:6. § Rom. 3:28. || Eph. 2:8.

¶ 11 Art. of religion.

8. Faith, divested of the meretricious circumstances thrown around it by human ingenuity, consists, simply, in a firm, vigorous, and operative belief of what God is, and what he has done for us ; or in other words, of his existence, and determinations in regard to our race. Illustrative of the nature and progress of this principle St. Paul exclaimed, " O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death ?" and then adds, " I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." He here indicated, in the first instance, his feelings, arising from a conviction of his guilt and condemnation ; and then, his gratitude and joy, in relying upon the riches of divine mercy in Christ Jesus. And these, precisely, are the feelings of every individual in believing with a heart unto righteousness. Under a conviction of his exposure to the terrors of divine wrath ; of his utter inability to save himself ; and of the infinite sufficiency of Jesus Christ, to save to the uttermost all who come to him by faith, he confides in him alone for the fulfilment of the law's demand, and exercises in his promises that affiance which is the " substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen." In virtue of this act he is justified from all things, from which he could not be justified by the law of Moses, or by the law of nature. God, of his *mere mercy*, pardons his past sins, and restores him to his favour, in consequence of having *believed* the *truth* as it is in Christ.

9. We are bound to believe in the divine existence, because the belief of this fact is the germ or principle of all virtue. Every effect must have an adequate cause. Virtue is no more accidental than repulsion, attraction, or any other phenomenon of nature. It proceeds naturally from faith. " As a man believes so is he." If he believes there is no God, he will act accordingly ; if he believes in the divine existence, as stated in the holy scriptures, he will exemplify in his life

8. What is faith ?

9. What is the fourth reason for believing in the divine existence ?

and conversation, the precepts of the Bible. Whatever may be our faith, our conduct will be governed by it. Works are the natural and necessary results of faith. "Albeit that good works, which are the *fruits* of faith, and follow after justification, cannot put away our sins, and endure the severity of God's judgment; yet are they pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and do *spring out necessarily* of a true and lively faith, insomuch that by them a lively faith may be as evidently known as a tree discerned by the fruits."* "And by their fruits," says Jesus Christ, "shall ye know them."†

1. We are also bound to believe in the divine existence, because the belief of this truth will impart to us a salutary influence. That mind acts upon mind and produces an assimilating process, are facts known to every one. No individual can long associate with others without imparting to them some mental or moral power. Sympathy is as common in the moral world, as attraction is in the natural. The possession, therefore, of a sound faith will naturally impart to us a wholesome influence.

2. Nor do human beings act upon one another only by sympathy, but also by example. If a sound faith is productive of good works, it will not fail to produce actions worthy of imitation; and the exhibition of those actions will induce, at least, some to copy them. It is hence said, "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."‡

3. We are obliged also to believe in the divine existence because we are required to do so in the holy scriptures. "Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe in his prophets, so shall ye prosper."§ "Ye are my

1. What is the fifth reason for believing in the divine existence?

2. In what other respect does mind act on mind?

3. What is the sixth reason for believing in the divine existence?

* 12 Art. of religion P. E. C. † Mat 7:20. ‡ Mat. 5:16. § 2 Chron. 20:20.

witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servants whom I have chosen; that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he.”* And said Jesus Christ, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned.”† “Ye believe in God, believe also in me.”‡

4. And if we are under obligations to believe the divine existence, we, for nearly the same reasons, are bound to believe his word. The scriptures are emphatically a manifestation of the Divine Being: “The brightness of the everlasting light, the unspotted mirror of the power of God, and the image of his goodness.” The belief of them is indispensable to the regulation of our faith and practice; to the production of present peace, and future happiness; and is absolutely required.

5. The third *internal* duty that we owe to God is repentance for past sins.

6. This duty, properly speaking, comprehends three things: first, a conviction of sin; secondly, a sorrow for it; and thirdly, a forsaking it.

7. In the possession of that repentance that need not be repented of, we perceive alike the turpitude of our nature, and the enormity of our transgressions. The searching light of heaven has disclosed to us the sad reality that our whole head is sick, our whole heart faint; that from the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in us; but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores, that have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment.

8. This conviction of sin naturally produces a sorrow for

4. Are we bound to believe the word of God?

5. Which is the third internal duty that we owe to God?

6. What does this duty comprehend?

7. What does a conviction of sin imply?

8. What does a conviction of sin produce?

* Is. 43: 10.

† Mark 16: 16.

‡ John 14: 1.

it. "I am weary," said repentant David, "of my groaning; all the night make I my bed to swim: I water my couch with my tears. Mine eye is consumed of grief."* This sorrow, however, is not simply a mental anguish arising from a knowledge that we are exposed to present or future punishment; but a tender and filial grief for having sinned against the most endearing goodness, and offended the best of friends: an affectionate and child-like penitence, growing out of a conviction that we have dishonoured God, for whose dignity we should have a tender and paramount concern.

9. In the possession of true repentance we shall forsake sin: shall abandon not only our grosser crimes; but every thing forbidden in the law of God. Convinced that if we attempt to cover our sins we shall not prosper; but that if we confess and forsake them we shall find mercy; we are as anxious to detect and renounce the things forbidden in the scriptures, as we once had been to conceal them.

1. The genuineness of repentance can be ascertained only by the condition of our minds. It is not terror; it is not the violence of sorrow; it is not even a change in our conduct, that proves the sincerity of penitence;—but an abhorrence of all sin—a hungering and thirsting for all goodness—a fixed determination to walk in all the ordinances and commandments of the Lord blameless, arising from a radical change of our affections, our tastes, and our dispositions, effected by the power of divine grace.

2. The reasons for repentance before God arise from the facts that we are sinners in his sight—that we are infinitely dependent on him for all that we now enjoy, or ever can enjoy—and that repentance, in the covenant of divine grace, is a term of pardon and salvation.

9. What, in the possession of repentance, shall we do?

1. How is the genuineness of repentance ascertained?

2. What do the reasons of repentance arise from?

* Ps. 6:6, 7.

3. That, indeed, we are sinners in the sight of God is a position susceptible of the strongest proof. We perceive, from the slightest examination, that in almost every action of our lives we have failed to fulfil the object of our being;—that instead of pursuing the course best adapted to secure the greatest amount of happiness, and the highest perfection of our nature, we have adopted measures calculated to diminish our enjoyments, and to retard our improvement;—that we have contravened the laws of our nature, not only in the inordinate indulgence of our passions and appetites, but also in the perversion of our intellects;—that almost the whole design of God in creating us, as indicated by our adaptation and the holy scriptures, has been neglected and controverted.

4. Corroborative of this deduction are the dispensations of divine providence. Were we not sinners, we should not be sufferers. A benevolent and righteous God would never punish innocent and guiltless creatures. If there were no sin, there could be no suffering. The latter can, in the nature of things, be the effect only of the former. Did every creature act in harmony with the laws of his own nature, there would be no derangement; and suffering is merely the result of that derangement which arises from the conflict of principles designed to act in unison. If man suffers in body, it is because his physical functions are disordered; if he suffers in mind, it is because his moral or intellectual faculties are deranged. Suffering is the necessary result of physical and moral disorder; and sin is the cause of this disorder. Wherever there is a conflict of natural principles there is suffering; and wherever there is suffering there is sin. Man being the subject of the one, is certainly the perpetrator of the other. Every sigh he utters, every tear he sheds, and every pain he feels, proves that he is a fallen and guilty creature; that having violated the laws of his own nature, and

3. How does it appear that we are sinners?

4. How is this conclusion corroborated?

those of the universe, he is suffering the operation of their penalty.

5. But the proof of our delinquency is derived not merely from external testimony, but also from our conscience. The slightest retrospect of our conduct seldom fails to produce emotions, painful and condemnatory. Every individual, in the possession of a sound mind, has often experienced that remorse of conscience, which arises only from a conviction that he is a sinner. This is the testimony of our own nature, given in conformity with those laws, which were ordained by our creator for our government.

6. In perfect agreement with these deductions, the scriptures assure us that "the carnal mind is enmity against God;"* "that there is none that doeth good, no not one;"† "that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God."‡

7. But upon the very being against whom we are continually sinning we are infinitely dependent. He called us into existence, and made us what we are. In every successive moment he has not only sustained and perpetuated our being, but ministered to our comfort. For every feeling and operation of the mind, and for every action of the body, we are dependent on him alone. His fiat is the basis of our existence, and his will the source of our enjoyment. All the blessings of the present life, and all the hopes of that which is to come, are the emanations of his benignity.

8. But what, perhaps, is the most decisive reason for repentance before God is the fact, that in the covenant of grace it is made the condition of pardon and salvation. "Except," saith Jesus Christ, "ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."§

5. What else is the proof of our delinquency derived from?

6. What do the scriptures say concerning these deductions?

7. Against whom have we sinned?

8. What other reason is there for repentance?

* Rom 8:7. † Rom. 3:12. ‡ Rom. 3:19. § Luke 13:3.

And saith the apostle John, "if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us; but if we confess our sins God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."*

9. The fourth *internal* duty which we owe to God is love for his whole character, "Thou shalt," says Jesus Christ, "love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment."†

1. The precepts of the holy scriptures, although apparently delivered without thought, are often founded deeply in the philosophy of human nature. No analysis could have been more happy in reaching first principles, than the one we have just quoted. It is evidently the first and great commandment, because it is the basis of every other. The performance of every moral duty necessarily results from a love for God. The first, the best, and the greatest being as he is, he only is entitled to our primary and supreme affection. Among the elements of moral science this surely ranks foremost.

2. Our obligations to love God arise from the excellence of his nature—our adaptations to perform the duty—the tendency of the performance to promote our happiness—and the positive requirements of the holy scriptures.

3. Amid the darkness which involves the movements of the Almighty, we discover qualities in his character infinitely lovely. Although possessing in himself all that is necessary to constitute him happy, he is continually seeking the welfare

9. Which is the fourth internal duty that we owe to God?

1. What is the character of scripture precepts?

2. From what do our obligations to love God arise?

3. What are the qualities of the divine character?

* 1 John 1:8, 9. † Mat. 22:37, 38.

of his creatures. Of this fact we have ample evidence even in our own history. Short-sighted as we are, we discover in every dispensation of his providence, beneficence and kindness. Notwithstanding our ingratitude and sins, every manifestation of his will brings with it fresh indications of his goodness. Little as we understand of the designs of providence; its long and complicated chain of causes and effects; its amazing process of abstracting good from evil; and the ultimate objects of its operations, we cannot but exclaim with David, "Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men." Wonderful, however, as the exhibitions of divine goodness are in the systems of creation and providence, they are still greater in the gift of Jesus Christ. The incarnation of the son of God, his obedience to the requirements of the divine law in our behalf, and his submission to the operation of its penalty for our redemption, prove, in the highest degree, the riches of his goodness.

4. Nor are the obligations to love God with our whole heart less apparent from the adaptations of our nature. Exactly fitted as we are to the performance of this act, it must be our duty to accomplish it. Whatever, by the natural adaptation of his creatures, they are qualified to do, they are bound, subject to the other laws of their nature, to execute. Man, by his natural organization, is enabled not only to perceive the being and attributes of God, and the relation in which he stands to him; but also to appreciate his moral beauties. Fallen and corrupted as he is, it is impossible not to feel complacency and delight in the accurate and proper view of the divine character. This, when contemplated in its true light, never fails to awaken in every bosom the sentiment of love. Such is the moral nature of man, that the excitement of complacency and delight by an accurate and extended view of

4. From what else are our obligations to love God apparent?

the divine character, is no less natural than the elimination of heat by the process of combustion. The feelings of every individual as certainly respond in love to the divine excellence, when properly perceived, as that every effect is produced by a cause. Man, indeed, not only must love the divine excellence when seen in its true light; but, strictly speaking, he can love nothing else. There is nothing loveable in the universe, but as it bears the impress of the divine loveliness. A passion for any object not possessing, nor supposed to possess, the lineaments of the divine character, is merely the effect of instinct, of animal appetite, of habit, or of any thing but love. *Moral excellence* alone is the object of this affection, and God only is the possessor of this excellence.

5. And while man is eminently qualified by the adaptations of his nature to love God, the performance of this duty contributes greatly to his happiness. To have the energies of his nature directed to their proper object; to accomplish the high destiny of his moral being; to possess feelings in harmony with the principle of eternal excellence; to contemplate with rapture and admiration the primary qualities of all beauty; are the effects of loving God; and these effects are the elements of true happiness. Collaterally with these enjoyments we have the pleasing conviction that while we love God, he also loves us. And nothing can contribute more to the happiness of human beings than a persuasion of this kind. To believe that he, who holds in his own hands the destiny of the universe, is our friend and benefactor, cannot fail, even in the darkest periods, to cherish hope, alleviate affliction, and promote happiness. This state of feeling is, indeed, the only sunny side of human life. Without it, all is dreary, hopeless, and full of misery.

6. The scriptures, it is well known, abound with the

5. Which is the next reason for loving God?

6. Do the scriptures require us to love God?

strongest injunctions to love God. "I have," said Moses to the Hebrews, "set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil; in that I command thee this day to LOVE the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments, and his statutes, and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply: and the Lord thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it."*

7. The fifth *internal* duty that we owe to God, is an acquiescence in his providence and laws.

8. The doctrine of divine providence naturally follows from the fact that God is the creator of all things. The same considerations that induced him to create, would also induce him to govern and preserve. Whatever might have been the promotion of his honour by the first production of things, the discontinuance of his conservatory care of them would have derogated from his glory, as much as creating them had promoted it. Hence we are assured that in his "hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind;"† that "his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion is from generation to generation;"‡ that "he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth;"§ that "the kingdom is the Lord's: and he is the governor among the nations."||

9. All creatures, and all circumstances, are equally under the control of divine providence. The qualities, the modifications, and the movements of the material world, and all the motives, the feelings, and the actions of the moral, are alike subject to its direction. Controlling and actuating the infinitely complicated portions of the universe, it upholds

7. Which is the fifth internal duty that we owe to God?

8. From what does the doctrine of divine providence follow?

9. What is the extent of divine providence?

* Deut. 30:15, 16. † Job 12:10. ‡ Dan. 4:3. § Dan. 4:35.
|| Ps. 22:28.

and vivifies them all. From the lightest atom that floats upon the bosom of the air, to the grandest orb that glitters along the spaces of the skies, this directing and conservatory power extends.

1. Nor does it consist, as some suppose, in the operation of principles inherent in the works of nature; but in the immediate power of God. Whatever may be the apparent energy of creatures, they have derived it all from their Creator. All effects must have adequate causes, and creatures having no independent and active power, hold whatever they possess, only, by derivation. God alone is, and can be, the primary cause of all effects.

2. Nor is the supposition true, that things once in being will continue so, till a greater force than themselves puts them out of existence. For as the subsistence of all things depends upon the power that gave them being, when this power is withdrawn, they will of course cease to be. When the substratum is removed the superstructure necessarily falls. We might as well say that an effect will continue without a cause, as that things once in being will continue so after the energy that gave them being is withdrawn.

3. Nor is the doctrine, specious as it is, that God governs all things by secondary causes, less untrue. Being every where present, he is able to carry on his own government by the exercise of his own power. He, indeed may, and does connect causes and effects; but he alone can give efficiency to any cause. Properly speaking, he is the only independent and efficient cause in the universe.

4. The object of divine providence being the promotion of the best interests of the universe, every effort intended to counteract this design will ultimately prove abortive. Mov-

1. In what does divine providence consist?
2. Can things once in being continue so independently?
3. Does God govern all things by secondary causes?
4. What will be the result of opposing divine providence?

ing onward in silent but resistless majesty, it will accomplish, with unfailling certainty, its high designs. "He disappointeth the devices of the crafty, so that their hands cannot perform their enterprize. He taketh the wise in their own craftiness; and the counsel of the froward he carrieth headlong. They meet with darkness in the day time, and group in the noon-day as in the night. But he saveth the poor from the sword, from their mouth, and from the hand of the mighty."* From the first movement of divine providence till the present moment, it has continued its onward march, enlisting into its service, and overthrowing every thing arrayed against it. And should the universe combine to oppose its operations, it could not, for a single moment, impede their accomplishment. "The Almighty is of one mind, and who can turn him? and what his soul desireth, even that he doeth."†

5. Nor is the divine providence less distinguished for wisdom than it is for power. It selects alike the best ends, and the best means for the accomplishment of those ends. In the contradiction and coincidence of distant and proximate circumstances—the many strange and apparently accidental occurrences, resulting in the most important and interesting events—the alternate elevation and depression of the same people, and the same individuals—and in our own history we have ample illustration of this fact.

6. Disastrous as many of the dispensations of divine providence appear, they are infinitely good. Considered in an isolated point of light, they seem arbitrary and severe; but when viewed in connexion with the life which now is, and that which is to come, they appear, as they really are—*perfectly good*. In our present condition we see only as through a glass darkly; but when mortality shall have put on im-

5. Is power the only quality of providence?

6. What besides wisdom and power does divine providence comprehend?

* Job 5: 12—16.

† Job 23: 13.

mortality, and we are enabled to see, even as we are seen, the character of God's doings will stand forth with unmingled loveliness.

7. The reasons for acquiescing in the dispensations of divine providence arise from the sovereignty of God—from the purity and equity of his administration—and from the fact that such an acquiescence contributes to our happiness.

8. God being the creator and upholder of all things, has, of course, a right to dispose of them according to his own pleasure. In this respect no one can say to him, "what doest thou?" Absolute in his dominion, he doeth, and has a *right* to do, as seemeth good in his sight. "Who art thou, O man," saith an apostle, "that repliest against God? shall the thing formed, say to him that formed-it, why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour and another unto dishonour?"*

9. God, accordingly, in the exercise of his sovereignty, claims from his creatures unlimited submission. "Take no thought for your life," says Jesus Christ, "what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on."† "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added."‡ And he hath taught us to say to our heavenly Father, "thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven."§

1. But an acquiescence in the dispensations of God is required, not merely on account of his sovereignty, but also on account of the rectitude of his government. Be his sovereignty what it may, he is never, in a single instance, reck-

7. From what do the reasons for acquiescing in divine providence arise?

8. What is the first reason?

9. What does God claim from his creatures?

1. What is the second reason for acquiescing in divine providence?

* Rom. 9:20, 21. † Mat. 6:25. ‡ Ib. 6:33. § Ib. 6:10.

less of right. The entire system of his operations, however complicated and incomprehensible to the eye of mortals, must necessarily be in accordance with his nature—and this nature is *equity itself*. Being infinitely *good*, he is *inclined* to do what is right; infinitely *wise*, he *knows* what is right; and infinitely *powerful*, he will *do* what is right.

2. Nor is an acquiescence in the dispensations of divine providence less contributive to our happiness than it is conformable to equity. Yielding to the will of him who rides upon the storm and directs the whirlwind; who, in the twinkling of an eye, can exalt to heaven, or thrust down to hell, is not only an act of prudence, but a source of quietude. The will of God is only another name for equity; consequently, an acquiescence in it brings us into harmony with what is just; and this, to moral agents, is the only source of happiness. The adjustment of our mental faculties to their proper end; or, in other words, a submission to the will of God, as indicated by the nature and adaptation of his creatures and the holy scriptures, is the basis of all enjoyment. The more closely our minds approximate the principles of rectitude, the more sweetly they enjoy that harmony, which is the essence of true felicity. The faculties of every creature were designed by their Creator to act in unison with his will, and in doing so they attain the highest degree of perfectness they are capable of possessing. Consequently, an acquiescence in the dispensations of providence, resulting from proper principles, tend directly to the promotion of our happiness. Even in the most disastrous vicissitudes the language of such a feeling is, “the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away—blessed be the name of the Lord.”

3. In confirmation of the fact in question, we have the entire book of Job. And St. Paul expressly declares, “that

2. What is the third reason for acquiescing in divine providence?
3. What is the fourth reason for acquiescing in divine providence?

all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”*

4. The *external* duties that we owe to God comprehend—searching his written word—prayer to him for the blessings which he hath promised to bestow—observance of the holy sabbath—the public celebration of his worship—the reception of the sacraments of baptism and the Lord’s supper—and efforts to extend the influence of his gospel.

5. To search the holy scriptures with benefit, the process, in the first place, must be conducted with *candor*. This, in every kind of investigation, is so important, that without it success is not possible. In yielding to the influence of prejudice we shall inevitably be led astray. While controlled by a disinclination to receive the proofs of a proposition, they may, indeed, shine upon the minds of others with the brightness of a sun beam; but upon ours they will produce no conviction. In wishing a position to be false, we shall endeavour to prove it to be so; and even a failure in the attempt will only strengthen our prepossessions. No mental condition can be more unfriendly to the acquisition of truth than a want of candor. In the destitution of this virtue we are like a bark exposed to the fury of a tempest, without a rudder or a compass.

6. As we value our present and eternal interest, we should, in the examination of the holy scriptures, divest ourselves of prejudice. The language of our inmost souls should be,—“*this is the book of God, and whatever it teaches I will believe.* No doctrine, no theory, not comprehended in its sacred pages, shall be the object of my religious faith.”

4. What do our external duties comprehend?
5. What is the first requisite for searching the scriptures?
6. Is it important to search the scriptures with candor?

* Rom. 8:28.

7. Instead, however, of pursuing this course, we almost invariably *first* form a system of belief, and *then* search the scriptures to support it. Merging the doctrines of divine truth in our own notions, we are anxious only for their support. This process, however, in every age, has been productive of the greatest mischief. Had christians always searched the scriptures with singleness of mind, and thence deduced the principles of their faith and practice, the church would have been spared many of those divisions by which she has been long disgraced. In respect to the fundamentals of christianity there would have been a general unanimity; and on points of minor importance, a spirit of forbearance would have prevailed. The remark, so honourable to the primitive christians,—“see how they love one another,” would have been applicable, in every age, to the followers of Jesus Christ.

8. To candor, in searching the holy scriptures, should be added *industry*. This in every pursuit is requisite; but in that after a knowledge of salvation by Jesus Christ, it is infinitely important. Every moment we can spare from other duties should be employed in this. Comprehending, as the revelation of God does, his stupendous and complicated dispensations concerning man, it is impossible to obtain a knowledge of it without incessant effort. Hence said Jesus Christ, “*strive* to enter in at the straight gate; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.”* And the injunction, “*search* the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me,”† indicate the importance of a *laborious* investigation of their meaning.

9. And this industry, to be successful, must be *continued*.

7. Are the scriptures generally searched with candor?

8. What is the second requisite for searching the scriptures?

9. What is the third requisite for searching the scriptures?

* Luke 13:24.

† John 5:39.

The indolence, caprice, and prejudice of our own minds, are unceasing obstructions to the pursuit of knowledge. Lurking in the deep recesses of the heart, and exercising an influence over our mental powers, they not unfrequently prove to be at once the combatants and the conquerors. From their dominion nothing can deliver us but determined and persevering efforts. And to those inherent difficulties may be added the obscurity of the holy scriptures. Profound and sublime as they often are, the ascertainment of their meaning is not to be effected by a single glance. The patient and laborious process of comparing prophecy with prophecy, prediction with its accomplishment, doctrines with matters of fact, precepts with promises, history with the annals of contemporary authors, sacred diction with the language of uninspired writers, and revelation with the economy of nature, is not unfrequently indispensable—and this requires *perseverance*.

1. Nor should we, in searching the holy scriptures, neglect to be *methodical*. A promiscuous and desultory reading of the word of God is seldom beneficial. Connected as it is in every part, and each part tending to a single point, it is impossible to arrive at its full meaning but by studying it entirely. There is but little hazard in the assertion that without adopting this method, but slow advances will be made in the attainment of divine knowledge. In a desultory course of study, many passages, not improbably, will escape notice; and should those passages contain important promises or precepts, the loss will be irreparable. Ignorance is so far from being the mother of devotion, it is a source fruitful of disobedience. Desirous as we may be of conforming to the will of God, if we are ignorant of its import, our desires will be in vain. The circle of human duties being prescribed only in the word of God, and even in that in scattered and insulated passages, can never fully be apprehended, but by con-

1. What is the fourth requisite for searching the scriptures?

secutive perusals. Blooming like roses in the midst of thorns, as the revelations of God's purposes often do, they require an attentive and systematic hand to cull them. Should any of them be overlooked by the indulgence of a roving fancy, the delinquency will not fail to be productive of incalculable mischief.

2. Nor should we, in searching the holy scriptures, lose sight, for a single moment, of our native *weakness*. Feeling that God only is competent to instruct us in the mysteries of his revelation, we should, with ever-growing solicitude, beseech him, by the illuminations of his spirit, to teach us what we know not. Paschal, who not improbably possessed as strong an intellect as ever fell to the lot of mortals, always, in his latter years, read the scriptures with fervent and humble prayer, beseeching God to give him a spiritual frame of mind, believing that spiritual things can be only spiritually discerned.

3. But, as comprehending in a single word all that we have said, or can say, in reference to the proper method of searching the word of God, we will remark, in the last place, it should be read with *implicit faith*. It is certainly not the prerogative of human beings, to arraign at the bar of their own reason the wisdom of the Eternal; and to reject those parts of his revelation they are not disposed to understand; but with the deepest reverence and self-abasement, under all the exhibitions of his will, to say, "Speak, Lord, thy servant heareth." That faith which receives the scriptures as the word of God without reserve, and without qualification, is absolutely indispensable to the proper perusal of them. "Without faith," saith the apostle Paul, "it is impossible to please God."*

2. What is the fifth requisite for searching the scriptures?

3. What is the sixth requisite for searching the scriptures?

* Heb. 11 : 6.

4. We are bound thus to search the holy scriptures, because God has given them for our perusal—they, exclusively, contain information, on many topics, which it is important to understand—and the reading of them is an appointed means of salvation.

5. The almighty creator and sustainer of all things, possesses, necessarily, the right of universal government; and as this government naturally implies laws; the promulgation of those laws imposes upon his subjects the obligation of considering them. Hence, he said, “These words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.”* And says Jesus Christ, “Search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me.”†

6. That the word of God contains information important to human beings, no where else to be obtained, is evident even to the eye of reason. How we may obtain the remission of our sins, and a restoration to the divine favour, is a question of the deepest interest; but at the same time it is a question which the scriptures only are competent to solve.—Guided merely by the light of reason, in our investigations of this subject, we are led to conclude that sin is not remissible. God, we know, is infinitely just, and will impose upon his creatures no duty but what is *right*; and if, in the disregard of his requirements, they incur the penalty of his dis-

4. Which are the reasons for searching the scriptures?

5. What is the first reason for searching the scriptures?

6. What is the second reason for searching the scriptures?

* Deut. 6: 6—9.

† John 5: 39.

pleasure, we know of no process of reasoning by which they are assured of pardon? Can the infinitely holy and supreme governor become reconciled to offenders who *have* made, and *can* make, no atonement for their sins? Such a reconciliation would seem to be an act of mercy at the expense of justice, and consequently impossible. How God can restore a sinner to his favour while he is in arrear to justice, is a question infinitely beyond the power of human reason to resolve; but in the holy scriptures this mystery is explained with the greatest clearness. They tell us that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself."* That the eternal son, assuming human nature, suffered in that nature the penalty incurred by those who are justified and saved: That on every individual, who believes not, the penalty of doing wrong is inflicted in its full force; but in reference to every one who believes in Christ, the penalty of doing wrong is inflicted, not upon the offenders, but upon their substitute. By this arrangement sin is not suffered to be committed with impunity, nor is the rectitude of the divine government compromised; but in the language of the psalmist, "Mercy and truth meet together; righteousness and peace kiss each other."†

7. Should it be objected that this arrangement involves the incongruity of transferring the sufferings of the guilty to the innocent, it may be replied, that be this incongruity what it may, it is not peculiar to the scriptures. The innocent, in the ordinary course of things, not unfrequently suffer for the guilty; and the most abandoned are benefitted by the virtuous. Nothing is more common than for children to derive from dissipated parents the miseries of poverty and a sickly constitution; and for thrifless and vicious children to riot in the earnings of industrious and pious parents. Every public

7. What objection is here obviated?

* 2 Cor. 5: 19.

† Ps. 85: 10.

calamity, brought about by the disobedience of the people, falls with equal weight upon the innocent and the guilty. The entire system of divine providence seems to be founded upon the principle that the temporary interests of the few is to be merged into the benefit of the whole. And if this be the fact in the operations of nature, why may it not be so in the dispensations of grace? God, in transferring the punishment of the guilty to the innocent, in the system of redemption, consulted not only the interest of the whole, but the wishes of the sufferer. All that Christ achieved for the human race was done *willingly*. "I lay down my life," said he, "that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself."* And while he *voluntarily* submitted to the penalty of the violated law, he derived from the submission infinite *advantage*. "He saw of the travail of his soul, and was *satisfied*."† But in the economy of nature, the sufferings of the innocent, in consequence of the conduct of the vicious, are not only involuntary, but often without recompense. If, therefore, the latter can be just, so also can the former.

8. Besides the remission of sin and a restoration to the favour of God, there are other subjects, in which we are deeply interested, that are opened only in the holy scriptures. The darkness naturally resting upon the destiny of man, defies the scrutiny of human reason, and can be dissipated only by the light of heaven. There is not a single spot upon the face of this dark earth, on which we can stand, and feel that we are at home. All is wrapped in mystery; all is incomprehensible! To the most anxious and prying eye the limits of mortality oppose an impenetrable barrier. At this point the scriptures only are competent to lift the veil and disclose the realities of another world. The resurrection of

8. What other topics do the scriptures exclusively treat of?

* John 10:17, 18.

† Is. 53:11.

the body, the immortality of the soul, and the recompense which awaits the just in heaven, are lights flung upon our dark and dreary prospects only by the pages of inspiration.

9. That the searching of the holy scriptures is a means, appointed for the salvation of human beings, is a position too plainly authenticated to detain us a single moment. "As the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven," saith God, "and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater: so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."* "The gospel of Christ," St. Paul says, "is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."† And St. James asserts that, "Whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed."‡

1. The *second external* duty that we owe to God is *prayer* to him for the blessings which he hath promised to bestow.

2. Prayer, in the acceptation of the holy scriptures, implies the offering of our desires to the Father, through the mediation of the son, under the influence of the holy spirit, with suitable dispositions for those things which are promised in the gospel.

3. It consists, in the first instance, of *desire*. "It is not eloquence," saith a pious writer, "but earnestness; not the definition of helplessness, but the feeling of it; not figures

9. What is the third reason for searching the scriptures?

1. Which is the second external duty that we owe to God?

2. What does prayer imply?

3. Of what does prayer, in the first place, consist?

* Is. 55:10, 11.

† Rom. 1:16.

‡ James 1:25.

of speech, but compunction of soul.”* Without desire, in the strong meaning of the term, there can be no prayer. In scripture language, an hungering and thirsting for righteousness is the very essence of this duty. “My heart and my flesh,” saith David, “*crieth* out for the living God.”† We may pray in all the external attitudes of humility and self-abasement; may use the most appropriate and impressive language; join in the most scriptural and elevated forms of worship; but if we are not deeply sensible of our unworthiness; if we do not properly appreciate the importance of the divine blessings; if we do not *hunger* and *thirst* for righteousness, all will be unavailing. “The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.”‡ There is no feeling more adverse to piety than indifference to our spiritual wants. “Because,” said Jesus Christ, to the church at Laodicea, “thou art neither cold nor hot, but lukewarm, I will spue thee out of my mouth.”§ And “*strive*,” said he, “to enter into the kingdom of heaven: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.”||

4. Nor does prayer consist simply of desires; but also in *offering up* those desires to our heavenly Father. The supposition, which not unfrequently obtains, that the worship of the divine Being is merely passive; or consists only in meditation, is without the slightest foundation in truth. Jacob not only felt his need of the blessings which he sought, but even *wrestled* for them till they were bestowed. When the angel said, “Let me go, the day breaketh,” he replied, “I will not let thee go except thou bless me.”¶ And the redeemer said to his disciples, “*ask*, and it shall be given you; *seek*, and ye shall find; *knock*, and it shall be opened to you.”**

5. Nor is the precept here expressed in contradiction to

4. Of what does prayer, in the second place, consist?

5. Is the offering of our desires in words to God reasonable?

* Hannah Merc.

† Ps. 84:2.

‡ Mat. 11:12.

§ Rev. 3:16.

|| Luke 13:24.

¶ Gen. 32:26.

** Mat. 7:7.

reason. The natural tendency of our minds to express their feelings in words; the salutary effects of making known our prayers to God; and the satisfaction which always results from an humble and dependent intercourse with heaven, proves, in the eye of reason, the propriety of the precept, "Take with you *words*, and turn to the Lord."*

6. The object, to whom our prayers should be addressed, is the FATHER. In the system of redemption, each person of the trinity has his appropriate office. "Through him," saith an apostle, alluding to the son, "we both have access by one spirit unto the Father."† And the same sentiment is directly or indirectly expressed in many other passages of the New Testament.

7. Addressing our prayers immediately to the son and the holy ghost is, under certain circumstances, sanctioned by the scriptures, and adopted by the church; but this fact, instead of invalidating the statement we have made, seems to have been intended originally to establish the doctrine of the trinity; and this being done, our duty is, in ordinary cases, to address our prayers to the "God and Father of our lord Jesus Christ."‡

8. Whether the sentiment here stated be strictly accurate or not, we are absolutely certain that God *only* is the proper object of prayers. Neither saints, nor angels, nor any created beings, are permitted to be the objects of religious worship. So long as the first and second commandments remain parts of the decalogue, so long it will be our duty to address our prayers and supplications to God alone.

9. But while we scrupulously abstain from the popish prac-

6. Who is the proper object of prayer?

7. Is the addressing of our prayers to the son and holy ghost improper?

8. Should any created being be the object of religious prayer?

9. What is the proper medium of prayer?

* Hosea 14:2. † Eph. 2:18. ‡ Ib. 5:20. Col. 1:3; 3:17.

tice of addressing religious worship to created beings, we ought, with no less solicitude, to endeavour to present it through a proper medium. God, to every human creature is absolutely inaccessible, but through the mediation of his son.* This fact was made known to our guilty parents in Paradise, and in every successive dispensation has been disclosed with increasing clearness. Every victim which smoked upon the Jewish altar; every ceremony prescribed by the law of Moses; and every symbol of the christian church presented by the prophets, was intended to vindicate the necessity of the mediation of the son of God. The morning and evening incense, ascending from the golden altar, not only shadowed forth this important office, but also its acceptableness to the majesty on high. This was the true incense, which rendering redolent the Jewish service, secured to it the approbation of Jehovah. In reference to this fact, St. John tells us, "When the lamb had taken the book out of the right hand of him who sat upon the throne, the four beasts, and the four and twenty elders, fell down before the lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints."†

1. When the mosaical dispensation had passed away, and the realities which it typified took its place, the mediatorial offices of the son of God were stated in the clearest terms. "I am," said he, "the way, and the truth, and the life;" and "no man cometh unto the Father but by me."‡ And St. Paul says, "There is one God, and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus."

2. But to present our prayers acceptably to the Father, through the son, they must be offered under the influence of the holy spirit. Although we are not authorized to look for

1. What followed the abolition of the mosaical dispensation?

2. Under what influence should our prayers be offered?

* John 14:6.

† Rev. 5:8.

‡ John 14:6.

those immediate and sensible inspirations which the prophets, and apostles, and many of the primitive christians, certainly possessed, we may expect from the unction of the holy one, that earnestness, and fervour, and penitence, and faith, which are necessary to the acceptableness of our devotions. Such is our need of the divine assistance in the performance of prayer, that without it success will be impossible. To use the language of a reformer, "The holy spirit excites in us confidence, desires, and sighs, to the conception of which our native powers were altogether inadequate." And St. Paul says, "The spirit helpeth our infirmities with groanings that cannot be uttered."*

3. Our prayers, however, to be acceptable in the sight of God, must be offered with suitable dispositions. To meet the approbation of our heavenly Father, we must come before him with clean hands, and a pure heart.† It is the honest, the sincere, and the upright intention of the soul, which secures to us, through the merits of the cross, the favourable reception of our prayers. Every unholy motive, and every improper disposition, must, without reluctance or reserve, be given up. If we regard iniquity in our hearts, God will not hear our prayers;‡ and we are assured that he is of "purer eyes than to behold evil;"§ and that he cannot look upon iniquity with the least allowance. Upon this subject the scriptures are particularly exact: they point out not only what we should suppress, but also what we should cultivate. Vain glory, and the love of show, are definitely proscribed. "When thou prayest," saith Jesus Christ, "enter into thy closet; and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father who is in secret, and thy Father who seeth in secret will reward thee openly."|| Revengeful and malicious feelings are likewise interdicted. "When thou bringest thy

3. With what disposition should our prayers be offered?

* Rom. 8:26. † Ps. 24:4. ‡ Ps. 66:18. § Hab. 1:13. || Mat. 6:6.

gift before the altar," saith the same authority, "and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift."* Nor is the inordinate love of pleasure treated with less severity. "Ye ask," saith the apostle James, "and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts."†

4. But an abstinence from vice, simply, is not sufficient: we must cultivate the virtues. "Humble yourselves," saith the apostle Peter, "under the mighty hand of God, that you may be exalted in due time."‡ And to illustrate the importance of humility, "Two men," we are told, "went up into the temple to pray; the one a pharisee, and the other a publican:" the former stood, and prayed thus with himself: "God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are: extortioners, unjust, adulterers; or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week; I give tithes of all that I possess." But the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes to heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner." And it is added, "This man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."§ Humility, growing out of a conviction of our original and actual pollution, is absolutely indispensable to the acceptableness of prayer. The system of redemption, designing to stain the pride of man, and to humble him before his Maker, must accomplish its intended object; and until this is done, and the language of his heart is, "I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes," he will never find acceptance at the throne of grace. To humility must be added faith: that faith which receives, im-

4. Is an abstinence from vice sufficient to render our prayers acceptable?

* Mat. 5: 23, 24. † James 4: 3. ‡ 1 Peter 5: 6. § Luke 18: 10—14.

plicitly, the promises, the precepts, and the denunciations of the scriptures; which embraces Christ in all his mediatorial offices, and depends on him alone for pardon and salvation; which, in the expressive language of an apostle, “is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen.” And to crown all, we must cultivate that meek and submissive spirit, which never murmurs nor repines at the ways of God; but which receives with gratitude all the dispensations of providence and grace, whether they arrive at the expected time, or in the anticipated form or not. That submission which distinguished the son of God in all the changes through which he passed, should be the characteristic of our feelings, at all times, and under all circumstances. In every petition we offer at the throne of God, the language of our hearts should be, “Not my will be done, but thine, O heavenly Father.”

5. In the last place, we should pray for those blessings only which are promised in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Having forfeited, by wicked works, every title to the divine mercies, we can expect to receive them only upon the ground of unmerited goodness. Nothing can be more presumptuous than to ask God for things he has never promised to bestow; or to ask even his promised blessings at a time, or in a degree, he has not been pleased to authorize. In all our addresses to the throne of God, we should recollect that *sovereignty* belongs to him, and *submission* is appropriate to us.

6. But blessed be his name, and the riches of his grace in Christ Jesus, we are not straightened in the scope of our petitions. All the resources of divine goodness are in waiting, if we ask for them as directed in the scriptures. “The Lord God is a sun and shield, he will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold

5. What should we pray for?

6. Are we straightened in the scope of our prayers?

from them that walk uprightly.”* Every thing calculated, upon the whole, to promote our happiness in this world, and in that which is to come, is promised to us, if we seek it in a proper manner. All the varieties of prosperity and adversity; of sickness and health, as best adapted to our temperament, circumstances, and destination in life, are, upon this condition, secured to us, in the charter of grace. “If ye then, being evil,” said Jesus Christ, “know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?”†

7. There is, perhaps, in the whole compass of practical religion, no duty more positively required than that of prayer. Ever since the promise of divine mercy, through the medium of Jesus Christ, was promulgated to our guilty race, the performance of this duty has been enjoined with peculiar emphasis. It is represented, in the holy scriptures, as being the chief instrument of securing to us the blessings of the new-covenant. Christ, therefore, spake a parable to this end, that men “ought always to pray, and not to faint.”‡

8. The importance of this duty is often felt even without the light of the holy scriptures. In those unhappy countries, which have been for ages enveloped in the darkness of pagan superstition, it has been invariably performed. “The nature of God,” said Tully; “may justly challenge the worship of all men, because of its superlative excellence, blessedness, and eternity.” “And whoever doubts or denies this,” says Aristotle, “ought not to be dealt with by *arguments*, but by *punishments*.” The stoicks, who imputed so much to their own strength, and so little to divine assistance, not unfrequently retracted their general notions, and taught their disciples that, as no man could be good without God, so their

7. Is prayer positively required?

8. Is the duty of prayer ever felt without the light of revelation?

* Ps. 84:11.

† Mat. 7:11.

‡ Luke 18:1.

business was to pray to him. It has been a maxim of very general prevalence among the heathen, that all their actions should begin with the gods; that a blessing cannot be obtained from them without imploring their aid; and that their sacrifices are not duly offered, nor the gods rightly worshipped, without prayer.

9. Under the combined instructions of nature and revelation, the truly pious, in all ages, have acknowledged the importance of this duty. Even under the patriarchal dispensation altars were erected to the God of heaven, and men began to call upon his name. In the numerous changes and trials through which they passed, a resort to the throne of grace was always their refuge and consolation. Nor could they be induced, either by threats or promises, to relinquish the enjoyment of a privilege so productive of comfort and advantage. Under the succeeding dispensations of the divine economy, the importance of prayer to God seems to have been increasingly appreciated. Daniel, though prohibited, under pain of death, from praying to any god or man for thirty days, excepting to the king of Babylon, still persisted in addressing the throne of his heavenly Father. Life itself, in his view, was infinitely less desirable than the testimony of a good conscience, founded upon the faithful performance of his duty. "One thing," said David, "have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple."* Nor did he, under any circumstances, ever forget his resolution; but, amid the varieties of an infinitely checkered life, he considered it his highest privilege to inquire of God in his holy temple. Even Christ himself was attentive to the duty of prayer. He often retired to some lonely place, where no

9. What has been the conduct of the pious with respect to prayer?

* Ps. 27:4.

mortal eye could see him, and there poured out his supplications to his heavenly Father.* In the garden of Gethsemane he prayed till he sweat as it were great drops of sweat and blood falling down to the ground.† The last words which trembled on his dying lips were an address to his heavenly Father. “My God, my God,” said he, “why hast thou forsaken me?”

1. Even if the duty of prayer were not enforced by such examples, the fact of our entire dependence upon God is quite sufficient to show its reasonableness. From him, and him alone, flow all the blessings we now enjoy, or ever can enjoy. Always, entirely, and absolutely dependent on him are we for every breath we breathe, every word we speak, every act we perform, and every favour we enjoy.

2. Nor are we dependent only, but also guilty. Our conduct has been deeply marked, in every period of our being, with crime or imperfection. Long, indeed, is the catalogue of sins charged against us in the book of God’s remembrance: a catalogue, whose items defy our memory to recall, or even our intellects to enumerate.

3. Having rendered ourselves guilty in the sight of God, we are obnoxious to his wrath. Justice has long since cried against us, “cut them down, why cumber they the ground.” Because of our iniquities, “the hand of God is turned against us; he has compassed us with gall and travail; he hath bent his bow, and set us as a mark for his arrow, and hath caused the arrow of his quiver to enter into our reins; fear, and a snare, have come upon us, desolation and destruction.”

4. Thus guilty, and exposed to punishment, we ought, surely, to ask for mercy and forgiveness. Every compunc-

1. Does our dependence on God prove the propriety of prayer?
2. What does our guiltiness prove?
3. What is the consequence of having rendered ourselves guilty?
4. Should we not then ask for mercy and forgiveness?

* Luke 6:12.

† Ib. 22:44.

tious pang we feel, every discovery of peril we obtain, and every temptation with which we are assailed, urge us to the throne of God for his assistance.

5. Nor shall we find that prayer, even in the present life, is without benefit. Familiarizing our minds with the realities of another world, it excites a vivid sense of our unworthiness; of our entire dependence upon our heavenly Father; and of our absolute need of an interest in the merits of the cross. It awakens holy and elevated feelings; dampens the spirit of levity, vanity, and the love of pleasure; weans our affections from the world, and transfers them to things unchanging and divine.

6. Nor is the performance of the duty of prayer less delightful than salutary. In approaching to the throne of God with humble and longing hearts, heaven opens to our eye of faith, and pours upon our waiting souls its animating glories. When sick with the sins and sorrows of the world; when all the gaieties and pleasures of the present life lose their lustre and their power to delight, we find in prayer a consolation, which all the treasures of the earth can never equal.

7. Besides the pleasure immediately resulting from the act of prayer, it lays the foundation of a solid hope for future happiness. "Ask," says Jesus Christ, "and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened."* These are the assurances of him who cannot lie; of him who holdeth the keys of David, and shutteth and no man openeth, and openeth and no man shutteth; of him who is the faithful and true witness.

5. Is prayer in the present life beneficial?

6. Is prayer delightful?

7. Does prayer lay the foundation of hope?

* Mat. 7:7, 8.

8. But the most direct and powerful reason for praying always, and never fainting, is derived from the holy scriptures. In them prayer is distinctly represented as a condition, on the performance of which, the blessings of the new covenant are proffered. "Ye have not," saith the apostle James, "because ye ask not."* And Jeremiah says, "Pour out thy fury upon the heathen that know thee not, and upon the families that call not on thy name."† "Prayer," says Bp. Taylor, "is the effect and the exercise; the beginning and promoter, of all graces. A holy life is a continual prayer. Prayer is the peace of our spirit, the stillness of our thoughts, the rest of our cares, the calm of our tempest." The flowing of the vital current through its destined channels is not more essential to life and health, than prayer is to the increase of grace in our hearts. In the neglect, or even in the remission of this duty, it is impossible to advance in virtue. The soul, in itself, is like the unsupported vine, which, instead of shooting upwards, creeps upon the ground, and exhausts its vigour in unavailing efforts to ascend; but when animated with the spirit of prayer, it is like the same vine fixing its adhesive tendrils to the sturdy oak, rising to its summit, and waving, uninjured, its verdant branches amid the blasts of the tempest, or the rays of the summer's sun. Nothing but fervent and unceasing prayer can bring us near to our heavenly Father; can penetrate the clouds, which darken our distant prospects, and disclose to our weary eyes the sun of righteousness, shining in his cheering radiance.

9. The reasonableness of prayer, arising as it does from the light of nature, the examples of the pious in all ages, our weakness, guilt, and exposedness to punishment, the salutary influence of the exercise upon our lives; the satisfaction and

8. What is the most powerful reason for prayer?

9. What is the summing up of the reasons for prayer?

* James 4:2.

† Jer. 10:25.

delight it unfailingly produces, and the solemn and affecting manner it is enjoined in the scriptures—must, in the view of candid and considerate minds, be abundantly apparent.

1. The *third external* duty that we owe to God is the observance of the sabbath.

2. Of all the ordinances of revealed religion, the sabbath, unquestionably, is the oldest. It was instituted immediately after God had finished the creation of the world; and within a few hours, is coeval with the human race. On the seventh day “God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it; because that in it he had rested from all his works which God created and made.”*

3. From this period, till the giving of the law by Moses, the sabbath was chiefly, if not entirely, observed as commemorative of the rest of God after the labour of creation. But in the promulgation of the ten commandments, from the top of Horeb, this ordinance seems to have undergone some modification. The sabbath then was set apart not only as a day of rest, but as a period for religious worship, and spiritual improvement. “If,” saith God, “thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt *honour him*, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.”†

1. Which is the third external duty that we owe to God?
2. Is the sabbath of great antiquity?
3. Did the sabbath undergo any modification at the giving of the law?

* Gen. 2:2, 3.

† Is. 58:13, 14.

4. From the giving of the law till the resurrection of the son of God, the observance of the sabbath, in accordance with the object of its institution, was deemed, by the Jewish church, a duty of the first importance. Under the immediate direction of God, the disregard of its solemnity was made punishable with death. "While the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man that gathered sticks upon the sabbath day. And they that found him gathering sticks brought him unto Moses and Aaron, and unto all the congregation. And they put him in ward, because it was not declared what should be done to him. And the Lord said unto Moses, the man shall be surely put to death; all the congregation shall stone him with stones without the camp. And all the congregation brought him without the camp, and stoned him with stones, and he died: as the Lord commanded Moses."*

5. After the resurrection of Jesus Christ the sabbath was transferred from the *seventh* to the *first* day of the week. "On the first day of the week, (the day of his resurrection,) Christ met his disciples, assembled together. On the first day of the week following, he met them, again assembled together. On the first day of the week, at the feast, called Pentecost, the spirit descended in a miraculous and glorious manner upon the apostles. On the first day of the week, the disciples assembled together *customarily*, to break bread, and to make charitable contributions for their suffering brethren. From the first three of these facts, it is plain that Christ thought fit to honour this day with peculiar tokens of his approbation. From the last, that the apostles thought themselves warranted to devote it to religious purposes."†

4. Was the observance of the sabbath considered very important under the law of Moses?

5. When was the sabbath transferred from the seventh to the first day of the week?

* Num. 15:32—36.

† Dr. Dwight,

6. The fact of this transfer is likewise attested by the current of ecclesiastical history. Ignatius, a companion of the apostles, says: "Let us no more sabbatize, but let us keep the Lord's day, on which our life arose. Justin Martyr, who lived at the close of the first and the beginning of the second century, says: "On the day, called Sunday, is an assembly of all, who live in the city or country; and the memoirs of the apostles, and the writings of the prophets, are read." Irenæus, a disciple of Polycarp, the disciple of John himself, who lived in the second century, affirms that, "On the Lord's day every one of us, christians, keeps the sabbath; meditating in the law, and rejoicing in the works of God." Dyonisius, bishop of Corinth, who lived in the time of Irenæus, says in his letter to the church in Rome, "To-day we celebrate the Lord's day, when we read your epistle to us."

7. The object of the transfer of the sabbath from the *seventh*, to the *first* day of the week, was to render the christian sabbath commemorative of the accomplishment of human redemption, as well as of the rest of God after the labours of creation. Nor did the transfer, in the slightest degree, interfere with the spirit of the original institution. It was never intended that precisely the *same hours*, in every portion of the earth, should constitute the holy sabbath; but that *one seventh part* of the time should be set apart for divine worship and spiritual improvement. The Jewish sabbath, it is well known, commenced and terminated at sun-set; but as this event occurs at different hours, in different longitudes, it is impossible that the sabbath should comprehend precisely the same hours. While the sun rises to some portions of the earth, he is setting to others; and as the sabbath begins and terminates in accordance with these events, it must embrace different hours in different portions of the earth.

6. Is this transfer attested by the fathers?

7. What was the object of this transfer?

8. The observance of the christian sabbath implies, in the first instance, an abstinence from servile labour. It is intended, emphatically, to be a day of *rest*: a day in which the chains of slavery are to be stricken off, and the labouring world to enjoy repose. It is decided in the word of God that six days in seven are sufficient for the accomplishment of our secular business; and the experience of all past time demonstrates the correctness of the decision. Men of observation have found it always beneficial, upon the whole, to abstain from labour on the sabbath day. "Though," remarks the learned and pious sir Matthew Hale, "my hands and mind have been as full of business, both before and since I was made judge, perhaps, as any man's in England; yet I never wanted time in my six days, to fit myself for the business and employment I had to do, though I borrowed not a minute from Sunday to accomplish it in. But on the other hand, if I had at any time borrowed from this day for my secular employments, I found it furthered me less than if I had let it alone; and, therefore, when some years of experience, upon a most attentive and vigilant observation, had given me this instruction, I determined never, in this kind, to make a breach upon the Lord's day, which I have strictly observed for more than thirty years."

9. Nor should we, on the holy sabbath, merely abstain from servile labour; but also from dissipating amusements. Jaunts of pleasure, paying and receiving visits, reading novels, plays, and every kind of recreation, not having for its object health, or spiritual edification, is entirely inconsistent with the character of the Lord's day.

1. Resorting on Sundays to public places for amusements and conversation, is a practice pregnant with the greatest

8. What does the observance of the sabbath imply?

9. What besides servile labour should we abstain from on the sabbath?

1. What is resorting to places of amusement on Sundays productive of?

mischief. Like a devouring vortex, it draws into its horrid influence both the temporal and eternal interests of its victims. The finger of scorn should point at those, who, instead of keeping holy the sabbath day, pervert it to purposes of amusements and dissipation; and should this not bring them to a sense of their obligations, the penalties of the violated law should be administered.

2. The due observance of the sabbath, however, not only implies an abstinence from labour and dissipation, but also works of charity and piety. "If," saith God, "thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

3. The obligations to remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy, arise from the benignity of the institution, and the authority by which it was ordained.

4. Even under the disadvantages of an imperfect observance, this ordinance, in every age, has contributed to human happiness. Compelled by the circumstances of our being as we are, "in the sweat of our face to eat bread all the days of our life," the periodical intermission of labour is necessary to our comfort. Professors of the healing art, who have professionally examined the subject, have shown, with great force of argument, that so essential to the health and vivacity of the labouring class is the stated recurrence of a day of rest, that for its discontinuance nothing can make amends. So evident is this fact, that enlightened nations, in

2. What else does the observance of the sabbath imply?
3. From what do the obligations of the sabbath arise?
4. Is the observance of the sabbath beneficial to health?

every age, have made the subject of relaxation a matter of solicitous attention. Games, festivals, and publick celebrations were, to the ancient Greeks and Romans, a fruitful source of legislative enactments. And there probably is not a single nation upon earth, at the present time, who does not, in some form or other, recognize the importance of the principle, by making similar provisions.

5. Even in a financial point of view the observance of the holy sabbath is productive of great benefit. Experience has long shewn that unremitting toil breaks down the stoutest spirits, and extinguishes the most effective motives to exertion. Every individual, compelled by the force of circumstances to labour without days of rest, finds the effect is, not only a decay of strength, but also a diminution of the aggregate amount of productive effort. Health, strength, genius, and all the functions of the mind and body, are inevitably prostrated by unremitting toil. He that labours faithfully six days, and rests the seventh, will, in a given time, accomplish more than if he were to labour without intermission during the whole period. The institution of the holy sabbath is adapted exactly to the organization of human nature. Like the recurrence of balmy night, it frees the mind from corroding cares, disinthrals the body from servile labour, and prepares it for returning efforts.

6. Nor can it be denied that the periodical recurrence of a day of rest is friendly to the cultivation of the domestic virtues. The conjugal, parental, and filial feelings are all cherished by the observance of the sabbath. Freed from the cares and labours of the week, the family, collecting around the social hearth, forms a circle, in which the tender and delightful feelings are enjoyed in the freshness of a new creation. Enviably, indeed, is the privilege of that domestic circle, which, escaping from the toils of life, repose on the

5. Does the observance of the sabbath increase productive labour ?

6. Is the observance of the sabbath friendly to the domestic virtues ?

holy sabbath in the bosom of peace and love. In this enjoyment the peasant is equal to the monarch. With his children at his knees, and the partner of his cares and loves at his side, he may enjoy a day of rest, no less refreshing to his heart, than to his body.

7. The regular recurrence of the holy sabbath, and the benignity of its character, are well adapted to induce a preparation to meet it. Cleanliness, cheerfulness, moral and intellectual improvement, are the natural results of its appointment. The neat and well arranged apartments of the mansion; the quiet and cheerful aspects of the family; and the intercourse of congenial and tranquil minds, tend alike to the improvement of the understanding, and the solace of the heart.

8. Nor are the benefits of the sabbath confined to the domestic circle; but are intended to extend, without restriction, to the world. On that day of sacred rest the house of God is open for the reception of all. There the word of life, and the sublime mysteries of redemption, are dispensed for the edification of all who will receive them. The business of an active world is laid aside, and we are invited to worship our heavenly Father, in the beauty of holiness. Every thing around us exhorts us to the house of prayer; and in that house we may realize, "That they who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings, as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint."*

9. Besides the important and manifold advantages offered by the sacred sabbath, the observance of this holy day is required in the most solemn and emphatic manner. "Re-

7. Is the observance of the sabbath friendly to domestic neatness?

8. In what other respect is the observance of the sabbath beneficial?

9. Is the observance of the sabbath positively required?

* Is. 40:31.

member the sabbath, to keep it holy," saith God. "Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it."*

1. This precept was evidently intended to be perpetual in its obligations. *It is so in its very nature.* "It was designed," says Dr. Dwight, "to give the laborious classes of mankind an opportunity of resting from toil—to enjoy a commemoration of the wisdom, power, and goodness of God in the creation of the universe—to furnish an opportunity of increasing holiness in man, while in a state of innocence—and to furnish an opportunity to fallen man of acquiring holiness, and of obtaining salvation. In every one of these respects, the sabbath is equally useful, important, and necessary to every child of Adam."

2. The observance of the holy sabbath is so intimately connected with the exigencies of human beings; so admirably adapted to promote their temporal and eternal interests; and so distinctly and emphatically enjoined in the holy scriptures; that the perpetuity of its obligations cannot be doubted for a single moment. The ordinance instituting and regulating the periodical recurrence of a day of rest, and of public worship, must be admitted, by every one who has taken the necessary pains to examine the matter, to stand among the wisest and kindest institutions. On this subject we have, directly or indirectly, the suffrage of the world. By every

1. Are the obligations of the sabbath perpetual?

2. What prove the obligations of the sabbath to be perpetual?

* Ex. 20: 8—11.

nation under heaven, from the creation, down to the present time, have institutions more or less analogous to that of the holy sabbath been observed. And we hazard nothing in the assertion, that if every thing of the kind was obliterated from the observance of human beings, there would be left a dreary blank, which the highest efforts of their united wisdom could never fill.

3. The *fourth external* duty which we owe to God is attendance on public worship.

4. This consists in humbly acknowledging our sins before God—rendering thanks for the great benefits we have received at his hands—setting forth his most worthy praise—hearing his most holy word—and asking those things which are requisite and necessary, as well for the body as the soul.*

5. The public worship of God may be considered in a two-fold point of light: as *external* and *internal*.

6. The external part of public worship should be so conducted as to promote, in the highest possible degree, the only and proper feelings of this sacred service.

7. “Keep thy foot,” saith Solomon, “when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools.”† The design of these words is to persuade us to approach with humble reverence, both of body and mind, into God’s immediate presence; to conduct ourselves, during the time of public worship, with becoming decency and devotion; and to shew, by our outward actions, our inward sense of the divine majesty and glory. “Let

3. Which is the fourth external duty that we owe to God?

4. In what does public worship consist?

5. How may public worship be considered?

6. How should public worship be conducted?

7. What is a summary description of the manner in which public worship should be conducted?

* Book of Common Prayer.

† Eccles. 5:1.

all things," saith the apostle Paul, "be done decently, and in order."*

8. For the acceptable performance of public worship, we should be at the place of its celebration in due time. The practice of arriving *after* the commencement of divine service is highly reprehensible. It indicates a state of feeling utterly incompatible with true devotion. Were we animated by proper motives, instead of reluctantly repairing to the house of God, it would be the place of our chief delight. Like the psalmist, our souls would long, yea, even faint for the courts of the Lord; our heart and our flesh would cry out for the living God.† And this delinquency, besides indicating an improper state of feeling, interferes with the devotion of others. The noise and confusion consequent on late arrivals at the house of prayer, often render unintelligible the most important and interesting portions of the service. So great, indeed, is this annoyance, in many places, that nearly half the service is performed before the congregation is assembled and composed. And that, under the influence of such a nuisance, much of the power and efficacy of social and divine worship is neutralized, no one can doubt for a single moment.

9. Nor should we presume to enter the house of God without indicating, in the most decided manner, our sense of its appropriation. Being the residence of the Most High; the place where he records his name, and makes known to human beings the riches of his love, it is incumbent on us, with every external sign of reverence to tread his sacred courts. Knowing that the "Preparations of the heart, as well as the answer of the tongue, is from the Lord,"‡ we ought, even before the commencement of public worship, secretly to implore his aid. Under a conviction that holiness becometh the house of God forever, we should seek the

8. What is pre-requisite to the performance of public worship?

9. How should we enter the house of God?

* 1 Cor. 14:40.

† Ps. 84:2.

‡ Prov. 16:1.

sanctifying influences of his grace, that we may be enabled to wash our hands in innocence, and compass acceptably his holy altar.

1. Our demeanour, during the process of divine worship, in all respects, should be solemn and appropriate. Unimportant as the conduct of individuals, in the celebration of the divine service, may appear, it is always productive of good or evil. As surrounding objects seldom fail to exert an influence upon the mind, it is a matter of great importance that those objects, in the house of God, should be calculated to produce good impressions. Every one, adverting to his own feelings, knows that an improper occurrence in the place of prayer tends immediately to injure the spirit of devotion. The misbehaviour of a single person not unfrequently mars the service of a whole assembly. And on the other hand, solemn and impressive objects greatly predispose the mind to devout affections. When Jacob beheld the angels of God ascending and descending in obedience to his will, he exclaimed, "How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."*

2. In listening to the word of God, instead of graduating our attention to it by adventitious circumstances, it should be graduated by the dignity and importance of the message. The minister, speaking not in his own name, but in the name of him who sent him, ought, according to the apostle Paul, to be accounted as the ambassador of Christ.† Ordained and consecrated to the ministry of reconciliation, he, while in the discharge of his official functions, is the representative of the son of God. Commissioned from the court of heaven, he comes not to treat of trifles; but to preach Christ, and him crucified. He is not charged with doctrines the people have

1. What should be our demeanour in the house of worship?

2. How should we listen to the word of God?

* Gen. 28:17.

† 2 Cor. 5:20.

a right to receive or reject, according to their own whim or pleasure, but with those which are emphatically the "Savor of life unto life, or of death unto death."*

3. To complete the round of public worship, decently and in order, we ought to remain a few moments, after its termination, in private prayer. The practice of rising upon our feet the instant the benediction is pronounced, and rushing from the sanctuary with an air of irreverence and precipitance, is exceedingly reprehensible. Lightness in the house of God, even at the conclusion of public worship, will certainly, though, perhaps, imperceptibly, lessen our reverence for that holy place, and consequently diminish the efficacy of this sacred ordinance.

4. The excellence of public worship consists, however, not so much in the grandeur of its ceremonies; the elevation of its ritual; the costliness of its temples, or even in the decorum of its ministrations, as in the purity and spirituality of its nature. "God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." †

5. In the celebration of public worship, no quality is more requisite for human beings than a sense of their *unworthiness*. This, indeed, is indispensable. Acknowledgments expressed in the most tender and pathetic language; prayers and praises adorned with the richest diction; ceremonies surpassing even the splendour of Jewish and pagan worship, will be less than nothing, in the view of God, unless accompanied with deep and unfeigned penitence. For the want of this nothing can atone. "The Lord," saith the prophet, "hath respect unto the lowly, but the proud he knoweth afar off." ‡ "He dwells in the high and holy place,

3. How should we complete the round of public worship?

4. In what does the excellence of public worship consist?

5. Is a deep sense of our unworthiness necessary?

* 2 Cor. 2:16.

† John 4:24.

‡ Ps. 138:6.

and with him also that is of a contrite spirit; to revive the spirit of the humble, and to cheer the hearts of the contrite ones."*

6. To a sense of our unworthiness must be added *fervour*. The unbounded riches of divine goodness; the short and uncertain continuance of human existence; the never-ending duration of our future being; the tremendous punishments which await the incorrigible, and the glorious rewards reserved in heaven for the just, all tend, or should tend, to animate us in the performance of the divine service. With these considerations pressing upon our minds, it would seem impossible to be languid in the house of prayer. Shall we, indeed, be active in every thing but in the service of our Creator? shall our hearts burn and glow to the fading beauties of created things, and possess no sensibility to the excellence of him who made us? No, certainly! With bosoms filled with the purest love, we should kindle into rapture in the worship of our Creator. Devotion, purer than the vestal flame, rising from the altar of our hearts, and ascending to the highest heavens, should inspire even the angelic hosts with fresher and sublimer strains. Do we, for a single moment, feel languid in the house of prayer, let us contemplate the bloody passion and painful death of "Christ crucified." Let us behold him in the garden of Gethsemane, praying in an agony, till he sweat as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. Let us follow him to the cross, and listen to him interceding for a guilty world, and crying out "It is finished; it is done;" and surely the affecting scene will not fail to warm and animate our minds; to kindle in us an ardour, strong as our necessities, and enduring as our wants.

7. The scriptures, by every argument that can sway the

6. Is fervour in the performance of public worship important?

7. Do the scriptures offer motives to fervour?

* Is. 57:15.

judgment, and by every consideration that can affect the heart; exhort us to fervency of spirit in serving the Lord. "O, come," saith the psalmist, "let us worship, and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker."* "Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise; be thankful unto him, and bless his name."†

8. To fervour should be added a solemn and enlightened *recognition* of the *divine perfections*. True piety does not consist in the effervescence of an heated imagination, nor in the outpourings of excited passions, but in clear and correct views of the divine Being, and corresponding acknowledgments of his perfections. That view of God which enables us to approach him as our heavenly Father, in the full assurance that his ears are open to our prayers, and his hands are ready to administer to our wants—that extends beyond the limits of mortality, and opens to us the realities of another world—that embraces the lamb of God not only in the manger, and on the mount of transfiguration, but in his agonies upon the cross, expiating the sins of a guilty world—that recognizes, with dread and overwhelming awe, the essence of the divine majesty, in which shine forth the splendours of the incomprehensible trinity—that unfolds the mighty movements of the universe, guided by the hand of God to that eventful crisis, when the heavens and the earth shall pass away with a great noise—that discloses the Eternal, seated upon his great white throne, fixing irrevocably the fate of angels and of men—is indispensable to the right performance of his worship.

9. To a solemn and enlightened recognition of the divine perfections must be added *love*. All our oblations; however splendid in the view of men, will, without this, be unavailing in the sight of God. It is that feeling which responds to the

8. Is a recognition of God's perfections necessary?

9. Is love for God important in his worship?

* Ps. 95:6.

† Ib. 100:4.

beauties of the divine character; that appreciates, in its full extent, the goodness of our heavenly Father, which sanctifies and renders acceptable our public service. In the estimation of him who demands the homage of our hearts, nothing can be substituted for love. All the gold of Ophir, and the cattle upon a thousand hills; all the sacrifices, offerings, and burnt offerings, that ever smoked upon the Jewish altar; and all the pomp and splendour of pagan superstition, are, in the sight of God, less than the dust of the balance, if not accompanied with a burning and animating love for his sacred character.

1. In the celebration of public worship, we should entertain for the divine Being a regard, not only for his relative goodness, but also for his intrinsic excellence. In this respect he is entitled to peculiar affection. We are attached to other beings for the relation they bear to us; or because, in some way or other, they are destined to contribute to our happiness; or because they reflect, in some degree, the loveliness of their heavenly Father; but we should love God on account of his inherent excellence. The fountain of all goodness; the perfection of every excellence; and the prototype of moral beauty, as he is, he is entitled, upon the ground of intrinsic and transcendent goodness, to our supreme affection. The language of our hearts should be, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee."

2. Such a love for God is necessary to the acceptable celebration of his worship. It is founded on the principle of eternal justice; gives vigour and animation in the performance of divine service, and renders the duties of the sanctuary pleasing and delightful. Burning upon the altar of our hearts, it melts down the asperities of our depravity, assi-

1. How should we love the divine Being?

2. Is such love for God necessary in his worship?

milates us to the image of our heavenly Father, and enables us to worship God in the beauty of holiness.

3. To love we should add *reverence*. The instant we enter his holy house, we should realize with Jacob, "How dreadful is this place. It is none other than the house of God, and the gate of heaven." Ours should be the feelings of the Hebrews, when, at the dedication of the temple, they bowed themselves, with their faces to the ground, upon the pavement, and worshipped and praised God. In all our approaches to the divine Majesty, and especially in the house of worship, "His fear should fall upon us, and his excellency make us afraid." "God," saith inspiration, "is greatly to be feared in the assembly of his saints, and to be had in reverence of all that are about him."*

4. We are bound to the performance of social and divine worship, because the service in itself is reasonable—furnishes a good example to the community in which we live—exerts a salutary influence upon those around us—protects us from many perils—affords efficient and important means for improvement—contributes greatly to our happiness—and is positively required in the holy scriptures.

5. It will be impossible, in a proper view of the relations we bear to God, not to perceive the reasonableness of rendering him public worship. We are as intimately related to him in our social, as we are in our individual condition. The ligaments that bind us to one another, and all the benefits resulting from the social compact, are produced by his arrangements. Every consideration that urges us to worship God as solitary individuals, also urges us to worship him as social creatures. In whatever capacity we are placed by the opera-

3. Is reverence necessary in public worship?

4. What is the summary of our obligations to worship God?

5. What is the first reason for public worship?

* Ps. 89:7.

tions of his government, we are bound in that capacity to offer him our homage. Every public favour that is needed, and every public benefit that is bestowed, demands the public aspirations of our hearts. In the same form that a benefit is needed or bestowed, should that benefit be asked or acknowledged.

6. Nor is the public celebration of divine worship only reasonable in itself, but contributes greatly to the general welfare. Wherever this duty is neglected, confusion, and every evil work, invariably prevail. In the character of communities regularly attending on the service of the sanctuary, and in that of those who neglect it, there is as broad a difference as there is between light and darkness. So evidently attested is the correctness of this statement, that every individual, of ordinary information, admits it without hesitation.

7. If the performance of public worship contributes to the general interest, an attendance upon it sets before the community a good example. Nor will the example, in any case, be inoperative. Man is naturally an imitative creature, and, almost without exception, follows the example which is set before him. Upon this principle, the conduct of every human being is productive of good or evil. The results of our example will not be confined by the narrow limits of mortality, but will extend through the interminable ages of eternity. Long after we shall have descended to the silent tomb, the effects of our conduct in the present life will be a beacon to guide the rising generations to the haven of future peace, or a rock on which they will forever perish. And surely no circumstance can operate upon our feelings with keener force, even in the regions of perdition, than a recollection that we had been the unhappy instruments of seducing from the paths of happiness our friends and relatives.

6. What is the second reason for public worship?

7. What is deduced from the above premises?

8. Nor will a general attendance on public worship fail to exert a salutary influence even in the temple of God. Whatever may be the abstract power of religious obligations, we know, by our own experience, that we are encouraged in the performance of duty by the countenance of multitudes. If, on entering the house of prayer, we discover only a few assembled for religious service, the effect, infallibly, is discouraging. The thought naturally occurs, "Can that be important in which so few take an interest? Surely, if religion were what it claims to be, its votaries would be more consistent." But when the house of God is crowded with adoring multitudes, and the solemn harmonies of his worship is performed by many, the result is always animating. The soul, in contemplating the objects, the interests, and the appearance of such a scene, seems to catch the fire of another world, and with more than mortal ardour to join in the praise of him who hath loved them, and washed them from their sins in his own blood, and hath made them kings and priests to God and his Father. That the union of many minds in the worship of their Creator is productive of an intensity of feeling, of which private devotion is not susceptible, is a fact founded in the organization of human nature. So sure as we are sympathetic in our feelings, the mingling of our devotions in the house of God is calculated to excite and strengthen our fervour. Though the worship of the true God is the result only of divine grace, yet is this grace generally communicated by the agency of material things; and its impression upon our hearts is more or less effective, in proportion to the adaptation of the things to the intended object. If, then, large assemblies, engaged in the divine service, contribute to its solemnity and impressiveness, it is in the power of every one to increase the efficacy of this ordinance; and in neglecting to do so, he becomes guilty in pro-

8. What is the third reason for public worship?

portion to the amount of good the performance of this duty would have produced. This fact, unimpressive as it now is, will, at some future period, be felt differently. When the long chain of causes and effects, which had been operating on human character, is exhibited in the final audit, it will be seen that the absence of individuals from the house of God had been productive of immeasurable mischief.

9. Nor will the regular attendance on the celebration of divine service fail to protect us from many perils. In absenting ourselves from the house of worship, on the holy sabbath, we are sure to be exposed to danger. Amusements, intrusive company, secular reading, and a thousand other evils, will continually solicit our attention; and if not discarded, as they ought to be, will acquire over us a pernicious influence. Who, we ask, are those that disregard the holy sabbath? that, spending their time in scenes of dissipation, neglect their families, their business, and their health? The answer is, those who are inattentive to public worship. Among these are that portion of the community who exhibit, in their daily conduct, the most disgusting vices. Nor is this surprising. If individuals will avoid the exhibition of the divine precepts, and pursue a course calculated to deaden the moral sense, the acquisition of vicious and destructive habits will be the natural and inevitable consequence.

1. A due regard to public worship will not only protect us from many perils, but also furnish important means for mental and moral improvement. The simple acts of preparing decently a family for the duties of the sanctuary, and mingling with the worshippers of God, in his holy house, never fail to exert a beneficial influence. And if circumstances, which are merely accidental, are salutary, the performance of the duty itself will be abundantly more so. To

9. What is the fourth reason for public worship?

1. What is the fifth reason for public worship?

confess to Almighty God our manifold sins and wickedness; to implore the exercise of his infinite benignity and mercy; to render him the homage of our grateful and adoring hearts; and to listen to his holy word, cannot, in the nature of things, but exercise over us a moral and restraining influence. And when to these considerations are added the divine promises, there can be but little need of multiplying arguments to prove the beneficial effects of social and divine worship.

2. Nor is this service less delightful than beneficial. To perform the worship of that high and holy Being, who is, emphatically, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin, is one of the most delightful exercises in which we can engage. In the performance of this duty, sentiments of love and adoration are excited for our heavenly Father; pity and compassion for our fellow-creatures; and prospects of peace and everlasting happiness are opened for ourselves. Hence exclaimed the psalmist, "A day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a door keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness."*

3. But the most impressive and conclusive reason for the celebration of social and divine worship is found in the requirement of the holy scriptures. To the Hebrews it was said, "The Lord who brought you up out of the land of Egypt with great power, and a stretched out arm, him shall ye fear, and him shall ye worship, and to him shall ye do sacrifice."† These are the words of him who "speaks and it is done; who commands and it stands fast forever." The remembrance of this fact alone is sufficient, we should think,

2. What is the sixth reason for public worship?

3. What is the seventh reason for public worship?

* Ps. 84:10.

† 2 Kings 17:36.

to induce obedience in every enlightened and considerate mind. To resist the authority of him who rules the universe; of him who kills and makes alive; who exalts to heaven and thrusts down to hell, is an act of the greatest folly. "Woe," says God, "unto the wicked; it shall be ill with him; for the reward of his hands shall be given him."* And the accomplishment of this denunciation is often witnessed, in part, even in the present life. The neglecters of divine worship not unfrequently imbibe sentiments, acquire habits, and indulge vices, which result not only in the loss of property, of health, and of reputation, but also of life itself. Nor are the evils proceeding from this delinquency confined to individuals, but extend to whole communities. The disregard of the apostolical injunction, "Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is,"† has introduced, not only into the domestic circle, a consuming canker, which has corroded and poisoned, at the fountain head, domestic morals and domestic happiness, but led to the destruction of entire nations. Corrupting the life spring of the social compact, it spreads through all the ramifications of the body politic a rapid and deadly poison. The feelings which incline us to absent ourselves from public worship aim alike at the destruction of the altar and the throne; at public morals and social order; at present prosperity and eternal happiness.

4. The *fifth external* duty that we owe to God is the reception of the holy sacraments. These are baptism and the lord's supper.

5. Baptism, in its original acceptation, signified the application of water for religious purposes. Among the Jews it

4. What is the fifth external duty that we owe to God?

5. What is the original meaning of baptism?

* Is. 3:11.

† Heb. 10:25.

was constantly understood and practiced in this general sense. Sometimes they plunged their whole bodies into water, and at other times their hands and clothes only. In receiving a proselyte to their communion, they not only circumcised him, but washed him with pure water, calling the ablution baptism, whereby he was made a new creature. From being a slave he now became a freeman, and his natural relations were no longer owned as such. The ceremonies of the Jews abounded with religious washings. Moses commanded them to wash their garments, and to purify themselves with water, by way of preparing for the reception of the law. The priests and levites, before entering upon the performance of their sacerdotal functions, washed themselves; and all legal pollutions were cleansed by the application of water, in conformity with prescribed rules. Besides these baptisms, John the Baptist introduced another. But to this baptism the virtue of a sacrament was not attributed: it was used merely as preparatory to the christian dispensation. St. Chrysostom calls it a bridge, which, as it were, made way from the baptism of the Jews to that of Christ's. It was superior in dignity to the first, and inferior to the second. Among those who are born of women, said Jesus Christ, there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist; but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.

6. But from all these baptisms the one in question is different. Christ having commanded his apostles to go into all the world, and preach his gospel to every creature, required them to administer baptism, not only as a badge of their discipleship, but as an initiatory sacrament of the new covenant.

7. Considering the ceremony in this light, it comprehends two parts:—the outward visible sign, and the inward spi-

6. Is the christian baptism different from those which have been mentioned?

7. How many parts does the christian baptism comprehend?

ritual grace. In the outward visible sign three things are included:—the application of water—the application of water in the name of the Father, and of the son, and of the holy ghost—and the application of water by a lawful administrator.

8. Water, in the sacrament of baptism, is essential. “Except,” saith Jesus Christ, “a man be born of *water*, and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”* Philip, after instructing the eunuch in the nature of his duties, commanded his chariot to stand still, and they went down both into the *water*, both Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him.† Peter seeing that the holy ghost had fallen upon the gentiles, answered and said, “Can any man forbid *water*, that these should not be baptized, who have received the holy ghost, as well as we?”‡ From these authorities it appears that *water* is an essential part of baptism; and how any one, believing in the inspiration of the holy scriptures, can deny it, is to us incomprehensible. No fact is stated with greater clearness in the New Testament, than that the apostles, in obedience to Jesus Christ, employed water in the administration of baptism.

9. But the application of water in the name of the Father, and of the son, and of the holy ghost, is another circumstance, essential to the validity of this sacrament. We have in the acts of the apostles, it is true, an account of persons being baptized in the name of “Jesus Christ,”§ and in the name of the “Lord Jesus;”|| but these instances furnish no proof that baptism performed, simply, in the name of Christ is valid. In the institution of the sacrament of baptism, the method of its administration is prescribed, by divine authority, and we have no right to depart from a single item of the pre-

8. Is water, in the sacrament of baptism, essential?

9. In whose names should we be baptized?

* John 3:5. † Acts 8:38. ‡ Ib. 10:47. § Ib. 2:38. || Ib. 19:5.

scription. The same authority which instituted the ordinance, also prescribed the manner in which it should be administered, and we are under the same obligations to observe the latter, that we are to recognize the former. When God, in the plenitude of his sovereignty, institutes an ordinance for our benefit, it is incumbent on us to observe it, in all its circumstances. We have no right to dispense with even the smallest incident with which it is invested; but are bound to receive it, precisely, as God gave it. Consequently, as Christ said to his apostles, "Go ye, therefore, into all the world, and preach my gospel to every creature; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the son, and of the holy ghost," we are under obligations to receive the ordinance of baptism in these names.

1. Respecting the two passages to which we have alluded, we may remark, in the first place, they are ambiguous. Baptizing in the name of Christ, may signify either baptizing in his name *only*, or baptizing by his *authority*, and in conformity with his *requirement*. In the passages alluded to, the latter, not improbably, was the fact. The persons baptized, submitting to the sacrament of baptism because Jesus Christ had commanded the observance of the ordinance, were said to be baptized in his name. In the concise description of events, in the holy scriptures, circumstances are often omitted.

2. But be this as it may, we may remark, in the second place, that negative passages, in the holy scriptures, can never neutralize positive precepts. Christ, in the institution of baptism, pointed out the manner in which it should be administered with circumstantial minuteness; and if, in the record of the administration of this ordinance, some of its original circumstances be omitted, it is evident that this omission can not render those circumstances nugatory.

1. What is the character of the two passages just alluded to?

2. Can negative passages neutralize positive precepts?

3. Baptism implies not only the application of water, and the application of it in the name of the Father, and of the son, and of the holy ghost, but also the application of it by a lawful administrator. There is not a single instance in the scriptures of an individual presuming to administer this sacrament without being first ordained to the ministry. "No man," saith an apostle, "taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron."* Every act, exclusively ministerial, performed by persons not admitted to the priesthood according to the holy scriptures is, in respect to its validity, as though it had never been performed. An order of men having been set apart, by divine authority, expressly for the performance of the sacerdotal functions, it is evident that men of this order only can perform them lawfully. A practice in contravention to this arrangement would be productive of the greatest mischief. It would subvert the principles of social order, and if persisted in, drive back society to its original elements. And acts, productive of such results, can never meet the divine approbation. "God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints."†

4. Such being the outward visible sign of baptism, we will, in the second place, consider the inward spiritual grace.

5. The sacrament of baptism, in its spiritual operation, constitutes us, in the first instance, members of the christian church. "By one spirit," saith an apostle, "are we all baptized *into one body*, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free."‡ And in reference to individuals who had become the subjects of this ordinance, the

3. Is a lawful administrator essential?

4. What will we next consider?

5. What is baptism in its spiritual operation?

* Heb. 5:4.

† 1 Cor. 14:33.

‡ Ib. 12:13.

same apostle remarked, "now ye are the *body of Christ*, and members in particular."*

6. In the second place it constitutes us *relatively* the children of God; or in other words, translates us from an uncovenant into a covenant relation; from a state of nature into a condition of grace. Hence the Jews, who had received the ordinance of circumcision, were called the children of God. "Ye are the children of the Lord your God," said Moses, "and shall not cut yourselves, nor make any baldness between your eyes for the dead."†

7. The phrase, "children of God," in the holy scriptures, is susceptible of different interpretations. It, however, generally means, either a translation from an uncovenant to a covenant state, or the renewal of our minds, by the influence of divine grace, in righteousness and true holiness. In the former sense it is to be understood as the effect of baptism. In the non-reception of this ordinance we are in no covenant relation to God whatever; but by submitting to it we are incorporated into his family, and made his children by adoption and grace.

8. In the third place, baptism constitutes us heirs of the kingdom of heaven; or, in other words, entitles us to all the privileges and blessings of the new covenant, on condition of complying with its provisions. Before we receive the sacrament of baptism we are "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world;"‡ but on the reception of this ordinance we become entitled, in virtue of the divine promises, to pardon, sanctification, the aids of the holy spirit, and eternal life, on condition of seeking them in the prescribed way.§ Baptism is not only an outward visible

6. What is the second effect of baptism?

7. What does the phrase children of God mean?

8. What is the third effect of baptism?

* 1 Cor. 12:27. † Deut. 14:1. ‡ Eph. 2:12. § Ib. 2:13—19.

sign of an inward spiritual grace, but a means whereby we receive the same, and a pledge to assure us thereof. "Blessed," saith Jesus Christ, "are they who do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."*

9. The obligations to receive the sacrament of baptism arise from its being an institution of Jesus Christ—from its edifying significance—from its being a profession of christianity—a means of admission to the christian church—and a seal of the new covenant.

1. "Go ye," said Jesus Christ to his apostles, "and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the son, and of the holy ghost."† It is evident from this commission that the sacrament of baptism was instituted by the great head of the church. And possessing, as he did, all power in heaven and in earth, this fact is a decisive reason for receiving it. Nor was it only instituted by the son of God, but he commanded his apostles to administer it to every creature: consequently, every creature is bound to receive it. The obligations, in the latter case, are no less apparent than they are in the former. The administration of the sacrament depending on the volition of the people, it must have been equally incumbent on them to receive it, as it was on the apostles to give it.

2. Nor is it possible for an institution to be better fitted to its destination than the ordinance of baptism is. Transferring its recipients, as it does, from an uncovenant to a covenant state; from a state of nature to a condition of grace; from the service of the world to the service of God, it is admirably adapted to indicate the nature of the transfer. Every

9. From what do the obligations to receive baptism arise?

1. How does it appear that baptism was instituted by Jesus Christ?

2. How is baptism fitted to its destination?

* Rev. 22:14.

† Mat. 28:19.

circumstance connected with the ceremony is of deep and edifying import. The administrator is called of God, and set apart to his sacred service—the ordinance is performed in the name of the Father, and of the son, and of the holy ghost—and the element of water symbolizes the purifying, refreshing, and fertilizing influence of the spirit, to which the recipient is now devoted. We perceive in the administration of the sacrament no meretricious circumstance; no unmeaning ceremony; no superfluous appendages; but only a simple, appropriate, and dignified indication of the ends for which it is administered.

3. Baptism being a profession of christianity, is, from this circumstance, of universal obligation. Christianity is not only *true*, but it is a system of *divine truth*, in which every living mortal is deeply interested. All the motives for believing truth, and for seeking our own happiness, concentrate in reasons for professing christianity. “Whosoever shall confess me before men,” saith Jesus Christ, “him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.”*

4. This sacrament being the appointed means of admission to the christian church, involves, on this account, additional obligations. If one individual may abstain from baptism, every one may; and thus the church may become extinct. While the perpetuity of the church depends on the accession of new members, it will be the duty of every individual to constitute a portion of that accession. That Christ designs the continuance of the church, and that the highest interests of the world require the accomplishment of this design, are positions too evident to be long questioned.

3. From what next do our obligations to receive baptism arise?

4. From what do additional obligations to receive baptism arise?

* Mat. 10:32, 33.

“Upon this rock,” said Jesus Christ, “I build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”* And to his apostles he said, “Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.”† If the benefits which the christian church has already conferred upon the world were swept away, there would be nothing left but a dreary waste of misery and confusion. Whoever doubts the correctness of this statement may easily remove his doubts. Let him, mentally, abstract from the earth all the science, literature, and improvements in the arts; all the courtesy, intelligence, and civilization of man; and all the temporal and spiritual comforts of christians, the church has been instrumental in producing, and the amount, worth possessing, that will remain, will not fail to convince him, that of all the blessings which God has bestowed upon our race, the church is incomparably the greatest. In this single institution is concentrated the immensity of divine love; the unbounded resources of redeeming goodness. If, then, Christ designs the perpetuation of his church; and if the highest interest of the world requires the fulfilment of the design; and baptism is a means essential to the accomplishment of the event, the duty of submitting to this ordinance is obvious.

5. To crown all, baptism is the appointed seal of the new covenant; the official confirmation of the charter of salvation. In the reception of this ordinance, all the promises of the gospel are secured to us, on the condition of repentance toward God, and faith in our lord Jesus Christ. When the people, on the day of pentecost, exclaimed, “Men and brethren, what shall we do? Peter said unto them, ‘Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the holy ghost.’”‡

5. Which is the last-mentioned source of obligation to receive baptism?

* Mat. 16:18.

† Ib. 28:20.

‡ Acts 2:38.

6. Such being the reasons for receiving the holy sacrament of baptism, it evidently cannot be neglected with impunity. If, indeed, the declaration be true, that whosoever offendeth in one point is guilty of all,* it will be impossible, in the neglect of this ordinance, to obtain salvation. Due allowance for invincible ignorance, and the influence of circumstances over which we had no control, will undoubtedly be made: but God assuredly, in his own time, will vindicate the honour of the institution, by inflicting punishment upon those who had contumaciously neglected it. In the day of judgment he will say, "Because ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof; I also will laugh at your calamity; and mock when your fear cometh."†

7. The other sacrament, demanding our attention, is sometimes called the eucharist, the communion, and the lord's supper. It is called the eucharist, because it is an offering of thanksgiving and praise to Almighty God, for his unbounded goodness in the redemption of mankind by the death of Christ—the communion, because it is the appointed medium through which God promises to bestow pardon and salvation upon those who receive it as they ought, a privilege in which all the members of the church have a common interest, and a badge of fellowship and brotherly love—the lord's supper, because it was instituted by our lord immediately after supper; that is, after eating the paschal lamb, which, according to its original institution, was about supper time.

8. The valid administration of this sacrament implies *three* things. *First*, a minister called of God, and set apart for

6. What will be the consequence of not receiving baptism?

7. Which is the other sacrament demanding our attention?

8. What does the valid administration of this sacrament imply?

* James 2:10.

† Prov. 1:26.

this purpose. No man, saith an apostle, taketh this honour upon himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. Accordingly, the first administrators of this sacrament were all consecrated to the sacred ministry. "*Jesus*," we are told, "took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to his disciples."* And St. Paul said, "The cup of blessing which *we* bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which *we* break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?"† *Secondly, bread and wine*: for the Lord Jesus, the same night he was betrayed, took bread, and, when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup; and when he had supped, said, "This cup is the New Testament in my blood: this do ye."‡ And *thirdly*, the consecration of these elements to sacramental purposes: for our lord sanctified the bread and wine before he gave them to his disciples.

9. Respecting the nature of these elements, after consecration, there has been much misunderstanding. This probably arose in the Greek church, out of a misapprehension relative to the worshipping of images; to correct which, the council of Constantinople decreed that the sacrament was the *image* of the body of Christ, in which the substance of the bread and wine remained. In reply to this decree, the second council of Nice declared, that after consecration the elements are *not* the image of Christ's body and blood; but are properly and literally Christ himself; being *really changed* into the divine nature by the act of consecration.

1. Thus originated the doctrine of the *real presence*, which for ages has been the subject of controversy. The

9. What is the nature of these elements after consecration?

1. What is the authority by which transubstantiation is supported?

* Mat. 26:26.

† 1 Cor. 10:16.

‡ Ib. 11:24, 25.

authority offered in confirmation of this opinion is the language of Jesus Christ at the institution of the sacrament: "This," said he, "is my body, and this is my blood."

2. But this language is, unquestionably, *figurative*; and only means that the consecrated elements are the image or representative of the body and blood of Christ. The figure of speech, here used, consists in the substitution of the thing *signified*, for the thing which *signifies*; and is of very common occurrence in the holy scriptures. "This is my covenant," said God to Abraham, "which ye shall keep between me and you, and thy seed after thee—every man child among you shall be circumcised."* In this instance circumcision is called the covenant, although, strictly speaking, it was only the seal of the covenant. In like manner, Moses called the paschal lamb, the lord's passover,† notwithstanding it was merely a memorial of that event. This mode of speech arose, necessarily, from the language in which the scriptures were first written. The Hebrew and Syriac tongues had no terms equivalent to the phrases "*to signify or denote.*" The Hebrews, therefore, say "*it is,*" for it *signifies*. In Genesis, the seven kinds *are*, instead of they *signify* seven years;‡ and in Daniel, the ten horns *are*,§ instead of they *denote* ten kings. And as Christ spoke in the Syriac tongue, he necessarily adopted this mode of speech, when he pronounced the words of the institution. His true and only meaning was, that the elements of bread and wine, after consecration, were symbolical of his body and blood, which he intended to offer up as a sacrifice for the sins of the world. In accordance with this interpretation we have the testimony of our senses and the current of revelation.

3. Nor are the writers of the first and purest ages of christianity silent upon this point. As if intending to guard

2. Is this authority conclusive?

3. What is the testimony of the fathers on this subject?

* Gen. 17:10. † Ex. 12:11. ‡ Gen. 41:25—27. § Dan. 7:24.

against the corruptions of future ages, they distinctly state that the act of consecration does not convert the elements into the actual body and blood of Christ, but only into symbols of his sacrifice and death upon the cross. Justin Martyr calls the consecrated elements "bread and wine, and a nourishment that nourisheth." Irenæus, speaking of the bread, says, "it is a bread over which thanks are given; and that it consists of two things: one of which is earthly and the other heavenly." Tertullian says that "Christ did not reject bread, by which he represents his own body; and that he gave the figure of his body to the bread." Origen observes, "we eat of the loaves which are set before us: which by prayers are become a holy body, that sanctifies those who use them with a sound purpose." "The elements after consecration," says Theodoret, "do not depart from their own nature, but continue their former substance, figure, and form, and may be seen and handled as before." And pope Gelasius declares that "the sacraments of the body and blood of Christ are divine things, so that by them we are made the partakers of the divine nature; and yet the substance of bread and wine, which are the image and resemblance of Christ's body and blood, in this mystery, does not cease to exist."

4. But in eschewing the doctrine of transubstantiation, we should not run into the opposite extreme. Notwithstanding this doctrine is evidently erroneous: is in contradiction to the clear and unequivocal testimony of our senses—to the nature and object of a sacrament—to the tenour of revelation—and to the belief of the earliest and best informed fathers of the christian church; yet it is incumbent on us to entertain for it the most profound and respectful sentiments. Although the consecrated elements are not the very body and blood of Christ, they are a divinely instituted means for the ratification of the new covenant, the reception

4. In renouncing transubstantiation what should we do?

of the graces of the holy spirit, and the public profession of faith in Jesus Christ.

5. Considered in this light, it is our duty to receive them with the most humble and pious feelings. By prayer, by meditation, and by the use of every means in our power, we should prepare for the reception of an ordinance so important and deeply interesting as that of the sacrament of our redemption by Jesus Christ, especially as we are assured by an apostle, "he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh condemnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body."*

6. The sacrament of redemption, in the first place, should be received with the deepest *reverence*. Instituted as it was by the great head of the church, and intended to be a ratification of the new covenant, and a pledge of Jehovah's good will towards our fallen race, as well as a commemoration of the sufferings sustained by the son of God in the achievement of our redemption, it is entitled to our most reverential regard. There is no transaction more awful and interesting than the reception of the holy eucharist. In this we approach to the altar of the Most High, and, as it were, before the cross, in view of the sufferings and death of Christ, renounce our allegiance to the wicked one, profess to believe in the gospel of divine grace, rely entirely upon the merits of Jesus Christ for pardon and salvation, and henceforth to walk in all his ordinances and commandments blameless. The holy eucharist not only retrospects all which Christ has done for our salvation, but looks forward, and recognizes all that is yet to come. Whatever is awful and interesting in the process of dissolution; in the irrevocable decisions of the last judgment, and in the changeless realities of another world, enter into the celebration of this christian sacrament.

5. How should this sacrament be received ?

6. Should this sacrament be received with reverence ?

* 1 Cor. 11 : 29.

In coming to the holy table the language of our hearts should be, "How dreadful is this place! It is none other than the house of God and the gate of heaven." The holy altar is no place for levity or worldly-mindedness; for self-righteousness or a dependence upon our own goodness; but the place where God, negotiating peace with guilty mortals, dispenses pardon and salvation to those who believe in Christ; and in coming to it our minds should be thrilled with reverence and godly fear.

7. In the second place, we should celebrate the eucharist with *gratitude*. Intended as it is to bring to our recollection the great love wherewith Christ hath loved us, the price he paid for our redemption, and the exalted privileges he hath secured to us by his death and sacrifice, an ungrateful heart, in the participation of the ordinance, is, of all things, the most offensive in the sight of God. Of every feeling which animates the human bosom, ingratitude is the most unreasonable. When we have long cherished for our fellow creatures sentiments of affection and regard; when, in every instance, we have promoted, to the utmost of our abilities, their present and eternal interest, we perceive that we are repaid only with coldness, indifference, and ingratitude, it is impossible not to behold their conduct with abhorrence. How, then, can we presume that God will look with approbation upon those around his holy altar, whom he hath redeemed by the sacrifice and death of Christ, enlightened by his blessed spirit, and instructed by his gospel, who, instead of contemplating these benefits with gratitude, look upon them with apathy and indifference? It is impossible. Ingratitude, in the sight of God, is as hateful as the sin of witchcraft. For the great things which he has done for us, he requires thankfulness; and we may rest assured that without an offering of this description all our efforts to please

7. Should this sacrament be received with gratitude?

him will be in vain. In approaching his sacred altar, we should call upon our souls, and upon all that is within us, to bless and praise his holy name.

8. In the third place, we should commemorate the death of Christ with a perfect *confidence* in his merits. Having, in virtue of his active and passive righteousness, made an atonement for the sins of the whole world, and rendered it possible for God to be just, and the justifier of the ungodly who believe in Christ, it is enjoined upon us to trust in him with our whole heart, and not to be afraid. We should not only feel that every hope and every wish for pardon and salvation independent of the cross is fruitless and offensive in the sight of God; but possess that firm and unshaken trust in the righteousness of Christ which will enable us to say with Paul, "The life I now live is by faith in the son of God." A simple, tender, and unqualified reliance upon the merits of the cross; a strong and unwavering belief that God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life, is absolutely essential to the proper celebration of the Lord's supper.

9. In the fourth place, we should receive this holy sacrament with a fixed determination to lead *a new life*. Particular and circumspect as we may have been, there are many things in which we ought to amend. We are required to grow in grace, and in the knowledge and love of God; and every time we approach his sacred table we should promise, by his assistance, to fulfil the requirement. Casting ourselves beneath the wings of the cherubim before the mercy seat, we should resolve to be his entirely, and forever. Desiring above all things to comprehend with all saints what is the length, and breadth, and depth, and height of divine love, we should beseech God, by the gracious influences of his

8. Should this sacrament be received with confidence in Christ's merits?

9. Should this sacrament be received with resolutions to lead a new life?

spirit, to accomplish in us this desire. As the hart panteth after the water brook, so should our souls pant for the living God. To partake of his divine nature and holiness; to awake in his surpassing loveliness, and therewith be satisfied; to leave the things which are behind, and press towards the mark of the prize of our high calling, which is of God in Christ Jesus, should be objects of increasing desire, in every instance, of coming to the lord's supper.

1. In the institution of the holy eucharist, Christ said unto his disciples, "*this do in remembrance of me.*"* The obligations of this requirement arise, chiefly, from the character of him who gave it, and the circumstances under which it was given. A few remarks upon each topic will now be offered.

2. There have been individuals, in every period of the christian era, who have considered the son of God, merely, as a creature. Some have accorded to him the highest dignity of created beings, others have reduced him to a level with the best of men, and many have not hesitated to impute to him ambition and imposture. Like every individual of extraordinary excellence, he has been the subject of unceasing misapprehension.

3. But whatever may be the view of men, in reference to the character of the son of God, the scriptures, on this point, are perspicuous and decisive. The voice of the Father proclaiming, "this is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased;"† his own assertion, "I and my Father are one;"‡ the declaration of the evangelist, "in the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God;"§ and the statement of an apostle, "that he was the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his per-

1. From what do our obligations to receive the communion arise?

2. What is the character of Christ?

3. What say the scriptures in respect to the character of Christ?

* Luke 22:19. † Mat. 3:17. ‡ John 10:30. § John 1:1.

son,"* incontestably prove the divinity of his nature. In union with this nature, he took not on him the properties of angels, but the seed of Abraham, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.†

4. Being "very God and very man," he appeared in our world as the expositor of human duty, both by precept and example. When darkness had covered the earth, and gross darkness the people; when the teachings of the patriarchs and prophets had lost their efficiency, and the traditions of the fathers had become mutilated or extinct, then said he, "lo, I come, in the volume of the book it is written of me, to do thy will, O God." He came to raise the veil which shrouded the eternal world; to exhibit distinctly the character of his heavenly Father; to disclose the relations in which he stands to the human race; and to unfold the nature and extent of his mediation.

5. In every period of his pilgrimage he exhibited the most active and abundant goodness. His piety was fervent, but not fanatical; his benevolence exuberant, but not ostentatious; his obedience exact, but not pharisaical. Amid the hosannahs and caresses of the multitude he retained his characteristic lowliness; and in spite of the most deadly malevolence he continued affectionate and kind. In the rough and stormy scenes through which he passed, he acted with consummate prudence, and his temper was ever sweetened by the most diffusive and endearing charity. His language, in a solitary instance, was never marred by an improper word; his conduct was never stained by an unworthy action; nor were his passions ever roused beyond the limits of the truest moderation. Towards the ignorant and poor, he was patient

4. For what purpose did the son of God appear in our world?

5. What was the conduct of the saviour in our world?

* Heb. 1:3.

† Ib. 2:16, 17.

and condescending; to the rich and powerful, firm and independent; to the docile and submissive, tender and affectionate; and to the refractory and disobedient, mandatory and sovereign. Instead of pursuing his own comfort, he sought, exclusively, the glory of his heavenly Father, and the happiness of the human race. Though he strewed the paths of mortals with the richest blessings, he remained himself poor and wretched. The foxes had holes, and the birds of the air had nests, but he had no where to lay his head. Whether we behold him on the mount of transfiguration; in the performance of miracles for the relief of suffering humanity; in his sorrow, weeping over the city of Jerusalem; or in his agonies upon the cross, he appears with infinite loveliness and sublimity. As a moral teacher developing the principles of human action; a prophet unfolding the events of future time; a master swaying the passions and conduct of his disciples; a philanthropist teaching "ignorance to see and grief to smile;" a companion harmonizing discordant and repulsive tempers; or in any of the multifarious relations in which he performed his stupendous acts, he was like a mighty column, standing in a vast and barren plain, not only without a parallel, but without the possibility of there being one.

6. Such being the character of him who said, "This do in remembrance of me," the precept must surely be obligatory. And when to this consideration we add the circumstances under which it was given, our conviction of its binding power must be complete.

7. In the view of his approaching dissolution, and the contumely and degradation he was destined to undergo, the son of God collected his disciples, and, as a token of reciprocal affection, instituted the last supper. As such it was received, and ever afterward regarded with the highest veneration.

6. What is the deduction from the above premises?

7. What was the object of Christ in instituting the supper?

Nor were the feelings of the apostles, in this respect, either unnatural or superstitious. The last moments of a beloved friend, the final request of a revered teacher, have, among all people, been held in reverent and sacred estimation. And if there be any propriety in these feelings; any sanctity in the fervent and affectionate wishes of an esteemed benefactor, entering upon the agonies of dissolving nature, the requirement in question cannot be disregarded. It comes enforced by all the circumstances of its being the last—the dying—the affectionate wish of the son of God.

8. This holy sacrament was instituted in view of that trying hour, when the saviour knew he would be almost entirely forsaken. In his arrest in the garden of Gethsemane; his arraignment before the bars of Caiaphas and Pilate, he foresaw that all men would be offended in him; and in the knowledge of this fact he instituted the ordinance of commemoration. On this occasion he seems to have said, “While I am forsaken by all the world, I wish to be remembered by my disciples. Will you forget me? Will you blot from your remembrance my sufferings, my redemption, and my love? O let not this be done, but cherish, in every period of your being, my memory with the greatest fondness.” Nor is this address inapplicable to us. We too are living in a period in which men are prone to forget the saviour; but will we add to the unhappy number? Is it not enough that the ungodly, who have no regard for Christ; that many, who have grown grey in the reception of this sacrament, now turn their backs upon the ordinance; that some of his younger disciples, who were once an ornament to his cause, have returned to the world again? Will we also go away? O let not this be our ungrateful conduct.

9. But the holy eucharist was intended not only to perpetuate the remembrance of the son of God, but also to pro-

8. Under what circumstances was the supper instituted?

9. For what, besides commemoration, was the eucharist intended?

mote our own happiness. While it is designed to be a memorial of his death and sacrifice, it is likewise a means for our comfort and improvement. Intended expressly to promote the spiritual and eternal interests of his people, it bears upon it his special blessings; never failing, when properly received, to be at once the seal of pardon, and the means of sanctification. In reference to those who receive faithfully the divinely instituted ordinances, Isaiah says, "They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures; for with thee is the fountain of life; and in thy light shall we see light." And said Jesus Christ, "Verily I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him."*

1. But notwithstanding the manifold sanctions of the precept, "This do in remembrance of me," it not unfrequently is neglected; and the neglecters attempt to justify their delinquency by argument, if not by scripture.

2. It is supposed by many that they are unfit to receive the sacrament of redemption until they have an abiding evidence of God's favour; until his spirit bears witness with their spirit that they are his children. This, however, is not true. The table of the Lord is not guarded with flaming cherubim, holding in their hands the sword of justice, to be employed in the destruction of the trembling sinner, who has fled for refuge, to lay hold of the hope which is before him; but it is the mercy seat; the place where God, in the

1. How is this institution treated by many?

2. Which is the first excuse for not receiving it?

* John 6:53—56.

plenitude of goodness, meets the humble penitent, who is desirous of fleeing the wrath to come. It is here he manifests, not the awful and alarming features of his character, but the tenderness of mercy and compassion. Here he makes his goodness pass before the weary and heavy laden, declaring that he is "the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious." And every individual, sensible of his guilt and helplessness, and anxious henceforth to comply with his requirements, is invited to approach and receive the pledges of his love. The instant we stop in our career of sin, and resolve, by divine assistance, to walk in the path of duty, we are fit to celebrate the lord's supper. It is not the voice of our heavenly Father, nor yet the dictate of enlightened reason, that chides the returning sinner for his wishes to communicate, but the remains of unbelief, and the suggestions of the wicked one. If the weary and heavy laden are invited to come to Christ, they are surely permitted to come to his holy supper; for this ordinance is neither more august, nor more sacred than himself.

3. But even if we are unworthy, this does not justify our delinquency. The cause of our unworthiness is wholly in ourselves. It is our own hardness of heart, our own want of faith, our own love of sin, that unfits us for the reception of the pledges of redeeming love. And this unfitness is subject to our own volition. Whatever may be our need of divine assistance, if we seek it with our whole heart, it will be given. The language of God is, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."*

4. Still, however, we think ourselves unfit to receive the

3. Does unworthiness justify a neglect for not communing?
4. Will abstaining from the communion make us worthy?

* Is. 55:7.

lord's supper; and upon this ground justify an abstinence from the ordinance. But will this course of conduct make us better? Will a neglect of the means of grace secure to us the possession of grace? Infinitely better would it be for us, in the language of the returning prodigal, to say, "I will arise, and go to my Father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son, make me, I pray thee, as one of thy hired servants;" and casting ourselves beneath the wings of the cherubim, exclaim, "Here, Lord, I give myself away: 'tis all that I can do."

5. Another excuse for neglecting the lord's supper is drawn from the want of time. It is alleged that the multiplicity of business, the pressure of care, and the nature of our avocations, render impracticable the performance of this duty. But will this satisfy our conscience? Do the obstacles we have ourselves thrown in the path of duty excuse us for not walking in it? Dependent as we are on God for time, and for every blessing we enjoy, is it right thus to defraud him of our service? In the twinkling of an eye he can blast our brightest prospects; derange our best concerted plans; touch with consuming sickness our dearest friends, and fire with a burning frenzy our own brain. In this condition of dependence, he claims our whole service; and no excuse, drawn from the want of time, will invalidate the claim. We have not the slightest reason to expect that death will wait upon our negligence; that the king of terrors will postpone his attack until our business is despatched. He is now approaching! his bow is bent, his arrow drawn, and probably, before we are aware of danger, he will have marked us for his victim, and laid us in the silent dust. Then will the language of the Judge be, "He that is filthy let him be filthy still;" as the tree falls so it shall forever lie.

5. What other excuse is urged for not communing?

6. Another excuse for abstaining from the lord's supper is drawn from its alleged inefficacy. "We have long," say some, "received this holy ordinance, but have never derived from it the slightest benefit." The excuse, however, is not valid. Individuals may indeed have partaken of the holy communion, and received no powerful, or even sensible communication of grace, and still have derived from the ordinance important benefits. The operations of God's spirit upon the human mind are not only various, but incomprehensible. We know not when they begin, or when they terminate. Often when we think we are the least influenced by divine grace, we are more particularly under its control. A conviction of the innate pollution of human nature; of our numerous and aggravated transgressions of the divine law; and of our absolute need of an interest in the merits of the cross, is as truly an effect of the grace of God, as the conversion of the three thousand on the day of pentecost. But even in the supposition that we have hitherto derived no benefit from receiving the holy sacrament, it does not follow that we should henceforth abstain from it. The fault was neither in God, nor in the ordinance, but in ourselves only. We had retained some beloved idol; some un-sanctified affection, which marred, in the sight of God, our whole service. It was a dereliction from the requirement, "My son, give me thy heart," and not a want of efficacy in the sacrament, which rendered the reception of it unprofitable. The promise of God is, "Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls."*

7. Others again abstain from the lord's supper, lest, in receiving it, they should, by subsequent unfaithfulness, incur

6. Is there any other excuse urged for not communing?

7. What other excuse is urged for not communing?

* Jer. 6:16.

greater condemnation. We are, it is true, continually exposed to peril; and the history of past ages show that the best men may fall into temptation. But is it wise to venture upon *certain* disobedience, to guard against *possible* aberrations? We might as well refuse to read the scriptures; to implore the divine blessings; or to perform any other duty; as to abstain from the lord's supper, from an apprehension that subsequent unworthiness will aggravate our condemnation. To pursue this course, is to plunge into certain evil, to render impossible the occurrence of greater, when both may be avoided. This is like taking poison to prevent strangulation, when neither is necessary. If we are exposed to temptation, we ought with greater diligence to use the means appointed for our preservation. "The whole," says our saviour, "need not a physician, but they that are sick." It is precisely because we are liable to sin that we should use the means intended to protect us from it. If to prevent dying of hunger we should eat; or to prevent falling into the hands of our enemies we should be watchful, the use of the means prescribed by divine wisdom is the only way in which we can hope to be protected from future lapses.

8. In addition to these excuses for neglecting the lord's supper, it is alleged, that whatever may be the obligations that some are under to receive this ordinance, all are bound to wait till they have obtained a distinct and particular conviction that it is their duty to communicate. But wherefore, we would ask, have they not received this conviction? Did not the son of God, in the same night in which he was betrayed, take bread, and, when he had given thanks, break it, and give it to his disciples, saying, take, eat, this is my body, which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me? Likewise, after supper, did he not take the cup, and, when he had given thanks, give it unto them, saying, drink ye

8. What other excuse is made for not communing?

all of this, for this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for you, and for many, for the remission of sins : do this as often as ye shall drink of it in remembrance of me ? And is not this sufficient to produce a conviction that it is our duty to communicate ? If, indeed, it has produced no conviction, that is no reason it is not obligatory. Delinquency in one instance is no excuse for another. Shutting our eyes to the obligations of duty will never operate a diminution of those obligations. The scriptures, and not our feelings, are to be the measure of our obedience ; and the head of the church having said, "This do in remembrance of me," renders it necessary to conform our feelings to the precept, and not the precept to our feelings.

9. Some allege, that notwithstanding they are sensible of the great importance of receiving the lord's supper, they are deterred from doing so by a knowledge of the fact that some of their acquaintance are at variance with them. But what of this ? Are we to neglect a duty because some are displeased with us ? Will we consent to be condemned, and lost forever, because we are not beloved by every one ? Offences, said our saviour, must needs come ; and we may rest assured, that so long as we are faithful in the performance of our duty we shall have enemies ; but this fact should have no effect upon our feelings, while we ourselves are anxious, as much as lieth in us, to live peaceably with all men. The redeemer, and every individual who assisted at the first supper, had enemies ; but, conscious as they were of the kindly feelings of their own hearts, they received the ordinance without hesitation.

1. Many, however, who find no fault with their own qualifications to receive the communion, neglect to do so, on account of the improper conduct of others. They tell us that the unworthy behaviour of professing christians render a

9. Is there any other excuse alleged for not communing ?

1. What other excuse is alleged for not communing ?

connexion with them, upon the basis of christian fellowship, impossible. Such delinquents, however, should recollect that, in the present instance, they may not be impartial judges. Being inclined naturally to think more favourably of themselves than they do of others, they may magnify their own virtues and their neighbour's faults. At all events, a recurrence to the admonition of the saviour may not be inexpedient: "First cast out the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye."* The truth is, the misconduct of others will never fulfil our own duty. "This do in remembrance of me," imposes an obligation upon us which no delinquency of others can revoke. In regard to our future and eternal interest, the conduct of others is to us a matter of indifference. In the day of judgment every man will be judged according to his own works, whether they be good or evil. Accordingly, Jesus Christ and his apostles communicated with Judas, although he was then known to be, in his heart, both a thief and a traitor.

2. The *sixth external* duty that we owe to God, comprehends efforts to extend his gospel.

3. Obligations to extend the gospel, arise from its benign effects in the present life, and its saving power in that which is to come.

4. The fairest way, perhaps, to estimate correctly the effects of christianity in the present life, is to compare the condition of our own country with that of others, in which the gospel is not known. Civil government, social refinement, moral habits, and religious enjoyment, will, of course, constitute the principal points in this comparison.

2. What is the sixth external duty that we owe to God?

3. Whence arise the obligations to extend christianity?

4. How shall we estimate the influence of christianity?

* Mat. 7:5.

5. Whatever may be the errors of civil governments now existing in christendom, they are incomparably superior to any in pagan countries. In that little speck of earth, known on the world's map as the theatre of christian principles, there is more of civil liberty than in all the world besides. We will go still farther, and assert, that in our own country there is more excellence of this description than the unbelieving world now possesses, or ever did possess. In proof of this position, we will refer, not to those countries on which civilization never shed its benignant light, but to the most learned and powerful of the unbelieving nations. What, then, we will ask, are the civil institutions of India and of China? Alas! they are oppressive in the last degree. Those governments, in all their ramifications, are administered with unmitigated despotism. Power, not equity, nor the promotion of human happiness, is the rule of action. Hereditary tyrants, or lawless usurpers, stretch their iron sceptres over millions of trembling vassals, not to protect them in their rights, or to encourage them in the pursuit of happiness, but like the whirlwind, or the mildew, to blight and destroy the very buddings of prosperity. But this is not the case with us. The mild and equitable principles of our holy religion have insinuated themselves into every branch of our political economy. The code of American jurisprudence is a transcript of that perfect law of liberty, which an apostle says is fulfilled in one word, namely, in love. Patriotism is stamped upon every institution of our country. Here there is no tyranny; no proscription; no bloody and relentless laws, to distress and crush the governed, for the gratification and aggrandizement of the governing. The fixed and acknowledged object of the government is, the promotion of the welfare and happiness of all.

6. There is not only more excellence in the civil institu-

5. What is the character of civil governments in christendom?

6. How are our civil institutions superior to those of pagan countries?

tions of our country than the infidel world now possesses, but more than it ever did possess. The ancient governments of Greece and Rome, we are well aware, have been long and loudly praised; have been held up to admiring nations as the perfection of civil polity; but we are confident that an accurate investigation of their character and tendency will result in a conviction that the reverse of this is true. The splendour and glory of the commonwealth, and not the happiness of the individuals of whom it was composed, was the principal, if not the only objects of those governments. Individuals were compelled to sacrifice their dearest rights to the interests of the state. The administrations of Greece and Rome were not so much intended to bring justice to the home of the humble cottager, peace and plenty to the industrious artizan, and domestic happiness to the lowly plebeian, as they were to crowd their annals with splendid and warlike achievements. And although, in the estimation of superficial thinkers, such governments rank high in the scale of political excellence, they will, in the view of enlightened statesmen, be ever held as prejudicial to human happiness. It is not the government whose operations appear upon the page of history with the greatest splendour and eclat that contributes most efficiently to the welfare of its subjects: for while we admit that ours, in these respects, are inferior to the ancient governments of Greece and Rome, we contend it is incomparably superior to them both, in the production of individual and general happiness. There is a mildness, an equity, a benevolence, exemplified in its operations, which embracing, without discrimination, the ruler and the ruled, set it as far above those governments in the scale of political excellence, as reality is above show. The gospel of Jesus Christ has shed upon our political institutions a mild and benignant influence, which heathen nations have never known, and never can know.

7. Nor has it exerted a less salutary power upon our so-

7. What is the influence of christianity on social feelings? -

cial feelings. Bad as the professors of our holy religion evidently are, they have better notions of the social virtues, and are infinitely more punctual in the performance of moral duties, than any other people. There is a savageness and barbarity in the social intercourse of pagan countries, shocking to the christian mind. The tenderest connexions existing in the social compact is there treated with neglect and cruelty. Woman, who is entitled to the protection and care of man, is continually the object of caprice and tyranny. Instead of those tender and soothing sympathies, so essential to the happiness of the "weaker vessel," she is destined to servile labour, to fill the most menial offices, and even to provide for her husband's wants. Excluded from the cheerful circle, cut off from the enjoyment of social life, harassed by unceasing jealousy, and exposed to the vexations of an unfeeling tyrant, she is a stranger to those elastic and delightful feelings which play around the heart of a happy woman. In the gloomy and repulsive principles of paganism there is nothing to cheer her bosom, to exalt and adorn her nature, to raise her in the scale of human beings, and to guard her sacred rights from the encroachments of her haughty lord. In the gospel of Jesus Christ alone she finds a guaranty to the exalted privileges which the God of nature intends she should enjoy. It is there said, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church;"* and the promulgation of this precept has long fixed in the mind of man a sentiment the most favourable to social happiness.

8. And while the gospel thus improves our social nature at the fountain head, it diffuses a benignant influence through the variety of its modifications. The parental affection, under the auspices of christianity, is discovered not only in its strongest, but in its freshest and purest forms. Stimu-

8. What effect has christianity upon parental feelings?

* Eph. 5:25.

lated by the most active and powerful motives, its efforts are directed unceasingly to the improvement of the rising generation. The parent's hand strews upon his children's path the richest and sweetest blessings; affording them every facility to the acquisition of science, of virtue, and of happiness. Unlike the offspring of heathen parents, who are devoted in sacrifice to propitiate their gods, our children are reared with tenderness, and educated with solicitude, until they become as plants grown up in their youth, or as stones polished after the similitude of a palace.

9. Nor does the ardour of parental affection often fail to excite in our children's bosom the feelings of filial regard. Here the hoary head, whitened by the frosts of many winters, seldom fails to find an asylum in the affection of his offspring; for while the gospel of divine grace commands parents to love their children, it likewise requires children to cherish and obey their parents.*

1. Even domestics, and the humblest menial, instead of being left to their master's mercy, find in the public sympathy a barrier against oppression. Unlike the unpitied Helot, they have, in the laws of their common country, a protector of their sacred rights. Should their masters dare to inflict upon them inhuman punishment, they would themselves become obnoxious to the penalty of the violated laws.

2. Such is the exercise of the social virtues in christendom, that there is nothing like it in all the earth besides. Vigorous and concentrated efforts are now making, and have long been made, to protect the helpless, reclaim the vicious, and to lessen the suffering of our unhappy race. Hospitals, houses of correction, seminaries of learning, and numerous other institutions, designed to mitigate the evils that flesh is

9. What effect has christianity upon filial feelings?

1. What effect has christianity upon masters?

2. Are the good effects of christianity upon society clear and distinct?

* Eph. 6:1—3.

heir to, are sprinkled, in magnificence, over our happy country, directing, by their lofty turrets, the wretched sufferer to HIM, who is the orphan's Father, and the widow's God.

3. From this improvement of the social feelings, a superiority of moral habits necessarily follows. Wherever christianity has been duly preached, there has been, at least, an external reverence of moral duties. But the polytheism of heathen countries, it is well known, is constructed in strict accordance with the basest passions. Consisting wholly of splendid ceremonies, nocturnal orgies, impure and scandalous mysteries, it requires of its votaries no morality. Nor is this the picture of idolatry as it exists in the ruder nations of the world, but as it existed in the most splendid periods of Greece and Rome. At the very zenith of Roman grandeur virtue was a mere shadow. It was employed only as a theme of eulogy, and never reduced to practice in private life. The most eminent and enlightened individuals were guilty of crimes not to be recorded on the present page; and the general character of the heathen world was, that they were given over to a reprobate mind, to do those things that were not convenient. The palaces of the mighty Cæsars raised their imperial turrets to the skies, crowned with matchless beauty and magnificence; but within they abounded with all manner of uncleanness. It is impossible to read the accounts which are given of those who held the sceptre of the world without blushing for human nature. The history of Rome alternately informs and pollutes, elevates and depresses the mind of the reader. If in one moment we follow the warrior through his victories with delight, and participate his triumphs with enthusiasm, the next discovers him, in his retirement, an object of loathing and disgust.

4. Nor is this description of the morals of ancient heathens

3. What effect has christianity upon morals?

4. Is the superiority of christian morals evident at the present time?

inapplicable to that of modern pagans. At the present moment, in the almost boundless regions which they inhabit, morality is scarcely known. Idolatry, perfidy, cruelty, and all the vices which follow in their train, are perpetrated with remorseless constancy. Bad as the morality of christians is, it is incomparably superior to that of pagans.

5. And while the gospel of Jesus Christ thus produces better morals in those who believe it, it contributes greatly to their comfort. Not to dwell upon the advantages of their external circumstances, we will advert simply to the hope with which they are inspired. Disclosing to their eye of faith the riches of redeeming love, it excites and cherishes unutterable delight in this respect. Renovated by the power of divine grace, and assimilated to the image of their heavenly Father, they stand and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God; feeling that, if the earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, they have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.*

6. And what enjoyment of the unbelieving world, we ask, is comparable to this? The religion of the pagan is a religion of austerity and gloom. It affords no purity of heart, no sweetness and elasticity of temper, no peace and joy in the holy ghost; but only crime, and guilt, and fearful apprehension. Involved in the clouds of a cruel superstition, he stumbles upon the dark mountains of death, and plunges in the dread abyss, unillumined by a single ray of that cheering light which comforts and sustains the dying christian.

7. Obligations to extend the power of christianity arise, however, not only from its benign effects in the present life, but chiefly from its saving power in that which is to come.

5. What effect has christianity upon human happiness?

6. Can paganism yield equal happiness?

7. Is christianity superior to paganism in respect to a future world?

* 2 Cor. 5:1.

“How,” saith an apostle, “shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach except they be sent?”*

8. It is shewn in these words that faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is an essential term of salvation—that an exercise of faith in him is impossible without a knowledge of his character—that God has instituted an order of men for the purpose of diffusing this knowledge—and consequently that it is the duty of all to assist in sending this order of men on this important mission.

9. That faith in the lord Jesus Christ is an essential term of salvation is every where represented in the holy scriptures. On this point they do not leave the shadow of a doubt. If they seem ambiguous and obscure in the discussion of some topics, on this they are perspicuous and precise. The messiah having been appointed in the council of divine wisdom the only ground of justification in the sight of God, it is ordained that faith in him shall be the exclusive instrument of procuring it. “He,” it is said, “that believeth on the son is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already.”† And St. Paul declares, that “neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith, which worketh by love.”‡

1. Important, however, as a belief in the son of God is, it can never be exercised without a knowledge of his character. “This is life eternal, that they might know thee,” it is said, “and Jesus-Christ, whom thou hast sent.” And St. Paul exclaims, “Yea, doubtless; and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my

8. How does St. Paul prove our obligation to extend christianity?

9. Which is the first proposition of this argument?

1. Which is the second proposition?

* Rom. 10:14, 15.

† John 3:18.

‡ Gal. 5:6.

lord; that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his suffering, being made conformable to his death."

2. A knowledge of the character of the son of God being essential to the exercise of faith, the great head of the church has appointed an order of men expressly to promulgate this knowledge. Noah, before the deluge, was a preacher of righteousness. David preached in the great congregation. Ezra and the scribes read publicly the books of the law and the prophets. In the celebration of public worship it was customary, in the time of our saviour, to read and expound the holy scriptures. And this arrangement, like all others existing in the Jewish church at that period, was improved by Jesus Christ. He appointed seventy disciples, and sent them forth, two and two, to preach his word. After his resurrection, he said to his apostles, "Go ye into all the world, and preach my gospel to every creature; and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." And having ascended on high, and taken his seat at the right hand of God, he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."*

3. It, then, being evident that faith in Jesus Christ is an essential term of salvation—that it is impossible to exercise this faith without a knowledge of his character—and that God has set apart an order of men expressly to communicate this knowledge, it follows that we all are under obliga-

2. Which is the third proposition?

3. What is the inference from these premises?

* Eph. 4:11—13.

tions to assist in the accomplishment of the undertaking. This conclusion is inevitable. No art, no sophistry, no ingenuity, can escape from it. It is the deduction of St. Paul himself; and comes authenticated, not only by apostolical authority, but also by enlightened reason.

4. Of all the projects in which human beings now are, or ever were concerned, the promulgation of the gospel of Jesus Christ is the most important. To this, every other system of operation should be subservient. The gospel is not only the source of temporal comfort, but the basis of future enjoyment. In comparison with efforts to extend its influence, every other enterprise dwindles into nothing. These efforts are glorious in their present results, and will be immortal in their future consequences. When all the pride and pomp of earthly greatness; all the achievements of merely human power; and all the schemes and hopes of ambitious mortals, shall have descended to oblivion, the effects of extending the gospel of the son of God, will encircle his eternal throne with fadeless and increasing glory. "They," says Daniel, "that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever."*

5. Contributing as the gospel does to the happiness of human beings in the present life, and to their eternal salvation in that which is to come, the duty of extending its influence is of paramount importance. Hence said the great apostle, "we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake."†

6. The duties, of which we have been treating in the present chapter, are admirably summed up in the catechism of

4. Is the promulgation of the gospel of Jesus Christ an object of importance?

5. What is the close of this argument?

6. What is the summing up of our duties toward God?

* Dan. 12:3.

† 2 Cor. 4:5.

the P. E. church, in the answer to the question, "What is thy duty towards God?" It is said—"My duty towards God is to believe in him; to fear him; and to love him with all my heart, with all my mind, with all my soul, and with all my strength; to worship him; to give him thanks; to put my whole trust in him; to call upon him; to honour his holy name and his word; and to serve him truly all the days of my life."

CHAPTER II.

Of the duties which we owe to our fellow creatures.

1. That human beings were designed by their Creator for the social state, is evident from their wants, their instincts, the benefits of that condition, and the nature of its conservative principle.

2. So numerous are the wants of man, that a supply of them, in an isolated condition, is impossible. Had he never entered the social state, he would have continued to the present moment more unhappy than the wandering Arab, or the Indian savage. Roving in a trackless desert, exposed to the rigour of the changing seasons, and oppressed with hunger, he would be less comfortable than the beasts of the woods. The social state, indeed, is necessary to the preservation of his existence. Brought into the world in a state of helplessness, he must inevitably perish if not protected by a friendly hand. Nor would his dangers be much diminished by the acquisition of experience and strength. Savage in his habits, and unsocial in his feelings, "man would be to man the surest and the sorest foe." Armed with the weapons of the forest, and stimulated by predatory passions, a war of exter-

1. Are human beings designed for the social state?

2. What do the wants of man show?

mination would be the object of his pursuit. Nor would he find in his fellow man the only cause of apprehension and alarm: the beasts of the woods, urged to madness by their hunger, would hunt him for their prey. Insulated, and consequently helpless, they would exterminate him from the earth, and govern, without a rival, the empire of the forest.

3. Nor are the instincts of man less active in the formation of society, than his necessities and wants. The voice of nature, in this respect, can neither be silenced nor misunderstood. Under the dominion of nature's laws; the impulse of nature's God, he feels that it is not good, nor even possible, to live alone.

4. But while an insulated or solitary condition is, to human beings, intolerable, the social state contributes to their comfort. The great diversity of situation, arising from this condition, is admirably adapted to cherish sympathy and benevolence. Conducted by a destiny as uncontrollable as discriminating, the human family presents a contrariety of circumstances, both interesting and mysterious. Some are raised to the summit of human glory, and others are depressed to the lowest point of humiliation; some are possessed with vigorous and shining intellects, while others drag out an existence in perfect fatuity; some enjoy health for four score years and ten, and then drop into the grave without a struggle, while others are afflicted with every evil that flesh is heir to; some possess estates in every quarter of the world, ships in every ocean, and palaces in town and country, and others have not wherewithal to meet their daily wants. This variety of circumstances has a natural tendency to excite and cherish our fellow feelings; to incline us, in the language of St. Paul, to exercise "mercies, kindnesses, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering and charity."

3. What do the instincts of man show?

4. Does the social state contribute to our comfort?

5. Nor is the social state less conducive to the gratification of our best feelings. Men at all times have derived from the society of their fellow men the sweetest and purest comfort. The judicious gratification and government of our social nature, not only give flavour to existence, but impart to character its brightest ornament; and to prevent their legitimate exercise, or to place ourselves under circumstances in which they cannot be employed, is to counteract the design of nature, and extinguish our best enjoyments.

6. And while the social state contributes to individual and general happiness, it is well adapted to our improvement. Scientific and literary associations, combining the experience of past ages with the present, and uniting the efforts of varied talents and acquirements, cannot fail to advance the objects of their pursuit. The results of such associations adorn the brightest pages of history, and present upon the world's map imperishable monuments of utility and grandeur. By the efforts of social industry sterile rocks are converted into fruitful fields; and towns, cities, and sumptuous edifices, now rear their heads where only the trees of the forest once grew. Had our predecessors remained in a savage state, we should behold upon the wide earth nought but the wastes of time and the wildness of uncultivated nature. And what is infinitely more important than merely secular improvements, society gives facility to the increase of religious knowledge. The social state is the appointed medium through which the concerns of another world are transacted in the present. Were man a solitary being, the gospel of Jesus Christ would be nearly powerless. Its institutions and precepts are all adapted to the social state; and in this state only can they display their wonted efficacy. While it requires us to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with

5. Is the social state grateful to our feelings?

6. Is the social state contributive to improvement?

all our mind, and with all our strength, it requires us to love our *neighbour* as ourselves.

7. From the fact that society is founded in human nature, many suppose it possesses not merely a conservatory principle, but also a tendency to continual improvement. They contend that, independent of external influences, its march is onward, to a state of happiness and perfection, of which, as yet, we have had no experience. This, however, is not true. Society, composed of human beings in their present state, has, exclusively of the divine influence, no tendency to improvement. Though its basis be human nature, and its continuance, in some form or other, certain, yet the materials of which it is composed, uncontrolled by the grace of God, inevitably tend to anarchy. In attestation of this statement we have the history of the whole world. That condition of social improvement, which, in its incipient state, promises the greatest prosperity, has a natural tendency to national calamity. The excitement of a military spirit, which leading to the achievement of splendid victories, infallibly excites ambition and revenge; plunges into war, and results in luxury and weakness. The industrious, enterprising, and successful pursuit of wealth, naturally ends in extravagance and dissipation. And even the cultivation of the sciences and the arts, beyond the point of practical utility, often terminates in speculation and skepticism. Every modification of society, arising merely from the suggestions of the human passions, has a natural tendency to revolution and anarchy. The body politic, though possessing, in some degree, the principle of regeneration, will, if not governed by the grace of God, infallibly yield to decay and dissolution. This, indeed, is the tendency of every thing merely human. The spirit of christianity, as exemplified by the apostles and the son of God, is the only sustaining principle of the social

7. What conclusion is drawn from the foundation of society?

state. Without this, neither power, nor wealth, nor enterprise, nor any other mortal expedient, can long uphold it.

8. Without morals, the prosperous continuance of the social condition is not possible. Were mankind, renouncing the obligations of the moral code, to live in accordance with the suggestions of their own passions, society would become intolerable. The sea, agitated by the fiercest tempest, would not exhibit a state of wilder and more terrific confusion than the human family would then present.

9. But the existence of morals without piety is not to be presumed. Human nature is too perverse to be restrained independent of religious motives. The instant the doctrine of the divine omniscience, and of a future retribution, is obliterated from the mind, the influence of moral obligations ceases to operate. Philosophy, with all her power, may declaim upon the advantages of virtue in the present life, but, in the absence of christian motives, it will declaim in vain. It is the powerful and persuasive influence of scripture doctrines only that will induce a course of conduct contributive to social happiness.

1. A system of moral duties, without the sanctions of religion, would be like cobwebs, which every one would brush away as often as it came in contact with his interest or his passions. So evident is this fact, that even pagan legislators have always invoked the influence of the doctrines of the omniscience and retributive justice of the divine Being. The worst systems of mythology ever presented to mankind recognize religion, of some sort or other, as the life of moral action; and in a mind renouncing the influence of this principle morality can have no residence.

2. And if moral obligations, without religion, are incom-

8. Are morals essential to the well being of society?

9. Can morals exist without piety?

1. What are moral duties without the sanctions of religion?

2. Will human enactments enforce morals?

petent to induce a discharge of social duties, human enactments will be equally inoperative. These, when brought to the highest possible perfection, are still defective, and comparatively inefficient. They can never be made sufficiently comprehensive to embrace rules of action in all cases of social intercourse; and if they could, they would still be inapplicable to the motives and feelings of the soul.

3. Should it be alleged that public sentiment furnishes a motive sufficiently powerful to induce the performance of social duties, it may be truly said, that notwithstanding this motive, in many instances, is more effective in the government of human conduct than either law or ethics, yet the substitution of it for christianity would be infinitely mischievous. To say nothing of the inability of public sentiment to reform itself when reformation is necessary, or of its incompetence to control our secret conduct, it evidently is a capricious and unsteady guide in the formation of the social virtues. In submitting to the government of this principle, we must not only yield to the intrigues of demagogues, the tyranny of despots, and the licentiousness of the unprincipled, but pursue a course of conduct tending to undermine the pillars of the social edifice, to crumble into ruin its fairest structures, and to resolve it to its native elements.

4. Whatever may be the opinion of speculative philosophers, it is evident, from the facts of ages, that true religion is the only conservative principle of social order. This alone can give stability to those connexions which our wants, our inclinations, and our interests, may induce us to form. It is the life, the soul, and the aliment of every social compact. In the absence of religious principle no institution can long flourish: a power, gradual, but certain in its operation, will destroy the fairest and brightest structure of merely human creation. Nothing but a recognition of the divine law as the

3. Can public sentiment ensure the observance of social duties?

4. What is evident from the facts of ages?

paramount rule of action can perpetuate the prosperity of society. Neither force, nor fraud, nor any of the expedients of human wisdom, can prevent the curse of God from resting upon it, and, with the certainty and steadiness of time, corroding and devouring its vital principles. Nothing but a conviction of the fact, that "Thou, God, seest me," and a conformity of conduct to this conviction will secure to us the blessings of the social state. This will lead to that high and holy bearing, which, under all the circumstances of life, will induce the pursuit of general, as well as of individual interests. It will dispose us to do unto all men as we would have them do unto us: and this at once is the source of social happiness, and social prosperity. "Blessed is the people," saith David, "that know the joyful sound. they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance. In thy name shall they rejoice all the day: and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted."* "And righteousness," saith Solomon, exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people."†

5. If, then, the wants, and the instincts of human beings compel them to the social state, and if that state contributes to their happiness and improvement; and is, at the same time, dependent for its salutary continuance upon the service of the true God, it follows that that condition is agreeable to his will.

6. Now from this condition arise a variety of relations, and from these relations a variety of duties. These duties may be considered as *general* and *particular*.

7. The *general* duties are those which are incumbent upon *all men*; and arise from the simple fact that they are members of the great community of man. These duties are expressed by the prophet Micah in a few words. "He hath

5. What is deducible from the above premises?

6. What arises from the social condition?

7. What are general duties?

* Ps. 89: 15, 16.

† Prov. 14: 34.

shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to *do justly*, and to *love mercy*, and to walk humbly with thy God?"*

8. To do justly is to render to every one his rights according to the relation in which he stands to us. "Render, therefore," saith an apostle, "to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour."†

9. In every social compact, there necessarily exists a variety of orders; and each order, in point of justice, is entitled to regard in exact proportion to the authority it possesses. Were our respect for individuals exclusively graduated by the standard of their worth, there would be an end to all government: social order would be subverted, and the elements of society thrown back to their native state. Officers in the possession of the same power would be differently regarded; every individual would be governed by his own estimate of the character of his rulers; interference and collision would inevitably ensue, and the dissolution of society would be the result. Hence is enjoined upon us the exercise of that justice, which respects every individual in exact proportion to the authority with which he is invested.

1. If the performance of this duty is important in any country, it is peculiarly so in our own. Living as we do, under a free government, an exact and conscientious regard for the constitutionally invested power of its officers can alone impart to it harmony and durability. The bitter and savage spirit of party politics, now prevailing in every portion of our country, will, if not moderated by a sense of justice, result in destructive consequences. It will sever the

8. What is implied in doing justly?

9. What exists in every social compact?

1. Is doing justly to the several orders of society peculiarly important in this country?

* Micah 6:8. † Rom. 13:7.

ligaments of our civil compact, and reduce the well-proportioned powers of government to anarchy and ruin. There can be no propriety in the action of government without adherence to fundamental principles; and one of those principles is, rendering "to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; and honour to whom honour."

2. A conformity to this principle, however, should not be confined to the civil compact, but extended to every community of which we are members. Every one should know his own place; and every one should perform the duties appertaining to that place. In every instance, a deviation from our own orbit is an infringement upon the rights of others, and consequently unjust.

3. But in graduating our regard for those whom providence hath placed above us, in proportion to their natural or adventitious eminence, we are not prevented from esteeming all, in accordance with their intrinsic worth. Every individual ought to be respected, in his private character, according to his own excellence. The claims of genius, of industry, of patriotism, and of virtue, are as much entitled to regard as the most perfect rights. Those malignant feelings which invest with darkness the brightest and purest actions, and seek to injure and depress the objects of their envy, are the most guilty and degraded feelings that can operate on the human mind. They are directly in contravention to that holy law, which requires us to render to every one his due.

4. Injurious, however, as the disregard of this requirement is, there is, probably, nothing more common. The breath of slander is borne upon every breeze, and infuses its malignity into every circle. The fairest character, the

2. Should doing justly be extended to the officers of all compacts?
3. Should we regard men according to their own worth?
4. Is envy a common and prevailing sin?

purest virtue, and the brightest genius, are all exposed to its deadly operations. Envy, the offspring of little and corrupted minds, though denounced in every page of inspiration, has always been an active agent in the concerns of men. But common as the indulgence of this passion is, we are called upon, as members of the social compact, to render to every one his due.

5. Nor will the observance of this rule prevent the exercise of particular kindness to our natural relatives. United to them as we are by ties of consanguinity, there are many reasons why we should cherish for them a peculiar regard. The voice of nature; the decisions of enlightened reason, and the language of holy writ, press upon us the performance of this duty; and the disregard of it has always been considered an evidence of deep depravity. He who disclaims particular regard for those in whose veins flows his own blood, and with whose prosperity is connected his own happiness, is alike at war with his own interests, and the best interests of the world. The voice of justice is, "Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged. Children, obey your parents in all things."

6. The neglect of this duty is not only a transgression of the law of justice, but a source of the greatest mischief. Misunderstandings among relatives poison, at the fountain head, their natural and sweetest comforts. Blighting the prospects of present and future happiness, they leave in their destructive train the severest evils which mingle in the cup of human suffering. A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city: and their contentions are like the bars of a castle.

5. Should we be particularly kind to our natural relations?

6. What is the consequence of neglecting this duty?

7. Nearly allied to this duty is that of being thankful to those who have done us good. Reciprocity, or, if this be impracticable, gratitude, under the benevolent dispensations of friends, is a duty as evidently growing out of the claims of justice as any other. He that receives without thankfulness the kindness of his fellow creatures, possesses a depravation of morals which would lead him, under an assurance of impunity, to the commission of any crime. In the calendar of human vices there is scarcely any tinctured more thoroughly with injustice than a forgetfulness of past favours. To return the kindness of others with indifference; to respond to their benefactions with unfeeling ceremony; to take no interest in the happiness of those who have done us good, is, beyond a question, the very essence of injustice. It is sinning against the law of love, and the best interests of the universe.

8. But whatever discrepancy of opinion may exist respecting our obligations to be thankful to benefactors, there certainly can be none in regard to reciprocity in business. It is clearly incumbent upon every one, in this respect, "to render to all their dues." This alike contributes to our own interest, and the interest of the world at large. It creates confidence, facilitates the transaction of commerce, and saves the expense and trouble of litigation. In view of the importance of this duty, the scriptures are particularly emphatic in urging the performance of it. "Ye shall do no unrighteousness," says God, "in judgment, in mete-yard, in weight, or in measure. Just balances, just weights, a just ephah, and a just hin, shall ye have."* And St. Paul says, "let no man go beyond or defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such."†

7. Should we be grateful to those who have done us kindness?

8. What is our duty in regard to commercial transactions?

* Lev. 19:35, 36.

† 1 Thes. 4:6.

9. Dependent as we are upon the benefactions of our common Parent, it is incumbent on us, to the extent of our ability, to help those who are in distress. The dispensation of property to objects of this description, is generally considered in the light of charity; but it is a dispensation clearly within the claims of justice. The proprietor of all things, having lent us our possessions, upon the condition of appropriating a portion of them to those who need, such an appropriation is as just as it is necessary. He who is reduced to extreme want by the occurrence of events over which he had no control, is as clearly entitled to our assistance, as if it were secured to him by the laws of the land. Were an individual to sink beneath the pressure of his wants in consequence of a refusal on our part to afford him aid, when that aid was subject to our will, we should be recorded in the book of God, as being accessory to his death. Affording relief, in cases of distress, is alike enforced by conscience, and the holy scriptures. "The poor," says God, "shall never cease out of the land: therefore I command thee, saying, thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy in thy land."*

1. Rendering to all their dues, implies a readiness, at all times, according to our ability, to make reparation to those whom we have injured. If at any time we have overreached the ignorant, or taken advantage of the poor, or defamed the innocent, it is incumbent on us to make reparation. Such is the importance of this duty, that the performance of it is essential to the christian character. "If a man shall cause a field or vineyard to be eaten, and shall put in his beast, and shall feed in another man's field;—of the best of his own field, and of the best of his own vineyard, shall he make

9. What is our duty in regard to the poor?

1. What else does doing justly imply?

* Deut. 15:11.

restitution.”* “If a man shall take away violently any thing, he shall even restore it in the principal, and shall add the fifth part thereto, and give it unto him to whom it appertaineth.”† “If,” said Zaccheus, “I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.” And, approving his resolution, our saviour added, “this day is salvation come to thy house.”‡

2. Nor should we forget that justice requires, in all our transactions, a conformity to *truth*. The violation of promises; the disappointment of hopes we may have created or cherished; pretending to be what we are not, or not to be what we really are; or in any wise departing from reality and fact, are acts absolutely prohibited by justice. The nature and truth of the divine Being, the interests of individuals and of communities, our own conscience, and the word of God, demand an abstinence from every species of disguise. “Wherefore,” saith an apostle, “putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour.”§ And saith the wise man, “let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart; so shalt thou find favour and good understanding with God and man.”||

3. Nor should we do justice merely to the external circumstances of our fellow creatures; but also to their motives and character. Motives should be deemed pure unless they are known to be otherwise. If we could see as God sees, we should often, no doubt, discover motives of entire purity prompting to actions of doubtful character. Such is the variety of the temperament, feeling, and perception of human beings, that actions of bad tendency not unfrequently proceed from good motives. Shyness often results from diffidence, unmixed with the slightest antipathy; vehemence

2. Does doing justly imply a conformity to truth?

3. Does doing justly extend to motives as well as conduct?

* Exodus 22:5. † Lev. 6:5. ‡ Luke 19:8, 9. § Eph. 4:25.

|| Prov. 3:3, 4.

from natural warmth, entirely free from anger and ill will; economy from a sense of duty, without a particle of parsimony; apparent hauteur from education or temperament, infinitely removed from intended arrogance; and indications of artifice and cunning without the slightest wish to deceive. Scarcely any thing in the scope of human enquiry admits of greater latitude of interpretation than the conduct of human beings. The difference obtaining in their mental organization, the degrees of their acquirements, the force of circumstances under which they act, and numerous other incidents, over which they have no control, often render inapplicable the same standard of action to the conduct of every one. In regard to the feelings, motives, character, influence, and interest of our fellow beings, we, in all cases, should do unto them as we would wish, in a change of circumstances, to be done by.* This is the golden rule, to which we are bound, in all our actions, to conform.

4. Whatever may have been the modifications of public worship, under the different dispensations of divine grace, there are certain principles of morality which have undergone no alteration. Immutable as the source is from which they emanated, they now are what they have always been, and what they will forever be. From the earliest records of time down to the present moment, it has been invariably the duty of human beings "to do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God." This duty, growing out of the nature and relations of things, can never undergo any modification while that nature, and those things continue as they now are. So long as the present constitution of the universe exists, it will be the unrevoked and irrevocable duty of human beings to conform to the demands of justice. Every consideration that binds them to any duty, binds them with

4. Are certain principles of morality unchangeable?

* Luke 6:31.

equal force to the performance of this. The Creator himself is infinitely *just*; and to his character every moral and intelligent creature is, according to his ability, bound to conform. Doing justly is, in itself, *right*; and no being, in the nature of things, can be exempted from doing this. The practice of justice contributes to our own *happiness*; and this object we are destined by our nature to pursue. Doing justly is promotive of the best *interests* of the universe, and the neglect of this object is obviously criminal. God *commands* us to be just, and this command he enforces both by promises and threats. “If a man be just, and do that which is lawful and right, and hath not oppressed any, but hath restored the debtor his pledge, hath spoiled none by violence, hath given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment, he that hath not given forth upon usury, that hath withdrawn his hand from iniquity, hath executed true judgment between man and man, hath walked in my statutes, and kept my judgments, to deal truly, he is just; he shall surely live saith the Lord God.”* “But the hope of unjust men perisheth.”†

5. The second general duty that we owe to our fellow creatures is “to *love mercy*.”

6. Mercy, says a learned writer, is that disposition of the mind which pities, and inclines us to relieve the miserable. It ought, however, to be distinguished carefully from those instinctive and cultivated feelings, which not unfrequently assume its aspects. The tenderness which suppresses admonition to a delinquent, because the administration of it would give him pain; the parental fondness which withholds correction from a beloved child, when its disobedience renders

5. Which is the second general duty that we owe to our fellow creatures?

6. What is mercy?

* Ezek. 18:5.

† Prov. 11:7.

it necessary; the pity of the magistrate, which suffers a criminal, injurious to society, to escape from deserved punishment; and the beneficence which indiscriminately gives to all who ask assistance—is not mercy; but weakness. While mercy, in its true and distinctive character, inclines us to pity and relieve the miserable, it inclines us to do this in accordance with justice.

7. Considered in this light, the exercise of mercy is a duty of universal obligation. It is of the nature of that charity which suffereth long, and is kind; which envieth not; vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things, and never faileth.”*

8. The terms “mercy, kindness, and charity,” are often used in the holy scriptures as synonymes of “love.” We shall employ them in this sense in the discussion of the present duty. “All the law,” saith an apostle, “is fulfilled in in one word, even in this: thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.”†

9. The virtue enjoined in these words is, in the first place, *disinterested*:—thou shalt love thy *neighbour as thyself*. It may not, as some imagine, imply an absence of all reference to our own good, but it inclines us to seek this in subservience to the good of others. A total disregard of our own gratification is obviously impossible. A state of feeling of this kind would be in contradiction to the most active and efficient principles of human nature. But though, strictly and philosophically speaking, love may not divest us of all reference to our own interest, it implies those feelings

7. Is the exercise of mercy of universal obligation?

8. Which are the synonymes of love?

9. What is the first characteristick of love?

* 1 Cor. 13:4—8. † Gal. 5:14.

which are the most delighted in doing good; that range of benevolence which renders our own happiness dependent on promoting the happiness of others. To regard an individual simply because he is kind to us; or to alleviate his wants merely because it contributes to our own interest, is not love, but selfishness. True benevolence, disdaining the dictates of a narrow and calculating policy, inclines us, to the utmost of our ability, to pursue the happiness of the universe. Imparting sweetness to the natural ascerbities of our temper, and imbuing our hearts with universal kindness, it induces a compliance with the divine requirement, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you."* Unrestricted by the ties of consanguinity, the habits of association, circumstances of locality, or natural sympathy, christian charity extends its benignant wishes to the limits of creation. Dissolving the fetters of sectarian bigotry, overleaping the boundaries of political proscription, and renouncing the system of a selfish reciprocity, its aspirations are bounded only by the residence of sentient being.

1. But notwithstanding the unlimited extent of charity, it is not without discrimination. Instead of prompting a promiscuous liberality, it conforms to the decisions of the strictest justice on comparative merit. Under its direction, we follow the example of our blessed lord, who graduated his approbation of human beings by the standard of moral excellence. His affections, even in the circle of his disciples, were governed by the laws of justice. While he loved all, he loved some more than he loved others. And the benevolence of his heavenly Father, unbounded as it is, is graduated by the character of its objects. Loving moral beings in proportion to their moral excellence, he entertains

1. What is the second characteristick of love?

* Mat. 5:44.

for them as great a variety of intensity in his affections, as there are shades of difference in their character. Nor does he require a uniformity of feeling in us, he does not himself possess.

2. Unlike circles formed upon the surface of the water, which die away as they recede from the centre of their movement, charity acquires strength as the sphere of its operation is enlarged. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it. Possessing an energy, which growing with the lapse of time, it operates, even in the agonies of death, with increasing vigour. This attribute of charity was illustriously exemplified in the conduct of the primitive christians. They jeoparded life, and every earthly consideration, to promote the happiness of mankind. And to some of their followers the same remark is still applicable. Amid the sufferings of burning climates, the snows of polar regions, and the most savage and inhospitable portions of the earth, they are triumphing over human perversity, and erecting enduring monuments of kindness. The plains of India, once whitened with the bones of deluded victims, and the cold and sterile mountains of Greenland and Labrador, in consequence of efforts of this description, now sustain a people who shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation.

3. Actuated by the impulses of christian kindness, we shall not be inactive a single moment. Our hands will be always open to supply the needy; and to every species of distress we shall be disposed to give relief. We shall be eyes to the blind, feet to the lame, and power to the weak. Strewing our paths with blessings of the richest kind, we shall brighten our extended course with cheerfulness and delight. By untiring efforts in doing good, the wilderness and solitary places will be glad, and the deserts will rejoice, and blossom as the rose.

2. Which is the third characteristic of love?

3. What is the effect of the activity of love?

4. But in the brightest exhibitions of usefulness charity is always modest. Instead of prompting us to place in the foreground the merit of our efforts, it inclines us to throw over them the mantle of oblivion. We do not our alms, under its impulses, to be seen of men; neither do we sound a trumpet before us as the hypocrites do in the synagogues, and in the streets, that we may have glory of men; but we give in secret, not letting our left hand know what our right hand doeth.*

5. Charity, in a word, is of celestial origin. It originates not in the soul of revolted man, but in the power of the holy ghost; not in the bosom of the carnally minded, but in the hearts of those who are born again. Affections renewed by the grace of God; a conscience sprinkled with the blood of Christ, and a faith which is not feigned, are the only elements in which it grows. It is the centre of every virtue; the grace and ornament of the christian character; or, in the language of St. Paul, the "bond of perfectness." What the girdle was to the Jewish traveller, charity is to the christian pilgrim. As the former pressed together, and kept in its proper place his outward and flowing garments, giving to his whole dress an air of gracefulness and perfection; so the latter, tempering the other graces, and confining them to their proper spheres, imparts to the character its highest excellence.

6. Obligations to love our fellow-creatures arise from the similarity of our condition—the tendency of doing so to promote universal happiness—the precepts of the holy scriptures—and the example of God.

7. Created by the same hand, redeemed by the same blood,

4. Which is the fourth characteristick of love?
5. What is the origin of love?
6. Whence arise the obligations of love?
7. Which is the first source of obligation?

* Mat. 6:1—4.

made partakers of the same hopes, and exposed to the same afflictions, it is certainly not unreasonable to cherish for one another the same feelings. Our sympathies, dependencies, and interests, all indicate the propriety of conforming to the law of kindness. Such is the instability of our temporal circumstances, it is not improbable that, in the course of human events, we may ourselves need the assistance we now possess the power to bestow on others. Often have we seen, in the circle of our own acquaintance, the sudden and unexpected ruin of individuals, whose prospects were once as flattering as our own. Their morning arose without a cloud; all above their horizon was calm and joyous; but a cloud lowered upon the brow of night; the spirit of a coming storm moaned loudly in their ears; and the tempest, bursting on their feeble bark, plunged them into hopeless ruin. And this may be our case; the bare possibility of which exhorts us, in the language of St. Paul, "Bear ye one another's burdens; and so fulfil the law of Christ."*

8. To reciprocate and cherish the benevolent affections, tend, in every instance, to our benefit. To love and be loved is the substance of human happiness. Bending, as we often are, beneath the pressure of affliction, nothing so effectually soothes and animates the heart as the reciprocity of kindness. This is to the moral world what the sun is to the natural. Animated by the influence of fraternal love, life is divested of its bitterest ills. "Behold," says David, "how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments; as the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore."†

8. Which is the second source of obligation?

* Gal. 6:2.

† Ps. 133.

9. Nor is the happiness resulting from the exercise of charity bounded by the limits of mortality, but will endure forever. “Tongues may cease, and knowledge may vanish away, but charity never faileth.” Love is no less the happiness of heaven, than it is of earth.

1. The precepts of inspiration, in reference to this duty, are neither obscure nor undecided; but definite, perspicuous, and positive. “Be ye, therefore, merciful,”* saith Jesus Christ, “even as your Father which is in heaven is merciful.”† And after explaining the first and the great commandment, he added, the second is like unto it—“Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.”‡

2. The duty of loving one another is enforced not only by the commandments of the Most High, but also by his *example*. “The Lord is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works.”§ “He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust.”|| “He so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”¶

3. The *particular* duties which we owe to our fellow creatures arise from modifications of the social state. These modifications, as recognized in the word of God, are domestic, ecclesiastical, and political.

9. Is the happiness of charity temporary?

1. Which is the third source of obligation to love our fellow creatures?

2. Which is the highest source of obligation to charity?

3. What do the particular duties we owe to our fellow creatures arise from?

* The word *perfect* may be translated *merciful*. This is its proper meaning, as the context plainly shows.

† Mat. 5:48. ‡ Mark 12:31. § Ps. 145:9. || Mat. 5:45. ¶ John 3:16.

4. The domestic modification comprehends the conjugal, parental, filial, and servile relations.

5. That the marriage, or conjugal relation is agreeable to the will of God is evident from the existence of the sexes—the feelings of human nature—its subservience to the propagation of the species—its tendency to promote happiness—and the requirements of the scriptures. The duties arising from this relation are *fidelity* and *affection*.

6. Individuals entering the marriage state are bound by the most solemn and imperative considerations to forsake all others, and cleave unto themselves only. This is evident from the benefits of fidelity—the declarations of holy scripture—and the nature of the marriage covenant.

7. A congenial and exclusive union of the hearts of the married pair, is alike the basis of their own happiness, and that of their whole family. It is the nucleus of domestic order and domestic prosperity. Wherever this exists, in its full strength, there is seldom the absence of other virtues. It not only sets an influential and salutary example, but tends to unite children in the bonds of confidence and love, to encourage domestic industry, economy, and all the social virtues, and to purify, at the fountain head, the most prolific source of human comfort.

8. Connubial fidelity, accordingly, is urged in the holy scriptures with uncommon earnestness. In the dispensation of the moral law, amid thunderings, lightnings, and the awful manifestations of divine power, God proclaimed, “Thou shalt not commit adultery.” And the crime here interdicted is uniformly treated in the holy scriptures as the most loathsome, and deeply imbued with turpitude, of any in the calen-

4. What does the domestic modification comprehend?
5. Is the marriage state agreeable to the will of God?
6. What is the first duty arising from this relation?
7. Which is the first reason for connubial fidelity?
8. Which is the second reason for connubial fidelity?

dar of human vices. "The man," saith God, "that committeth adultery with another man's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death."* And "because they have committed adultery with their neighbours' wives, I will deliver them into the hands of Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon; and he shall slay them before your eyes."†

9. That the marriage state involves inviolable and perpetual obligations to fidelity, is evident from the reply of our saviour to the pharisees. When they asked, "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?" he said unto them, "Have ye not read that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, for this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh. Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What, therefore, God hath joined together, let no man put asunder."‡

1. From the tenor of this passage, and of others of a similar import, it is evident that when individuals enter the marriage state they *twain* become *one*, *never* to be separated in feeling, in interest, or in pursuits, till death dissolves the marriage contract. This is the purport of the connubial covenant, and a violation of it is destructive of the best interests of the social state. "As crimes of this nature," says Dr. Dwight, "become less and less unfrequent, they become less and less scandalous; and by all who are inclined to perpetrate them, they are esteemed less and less sinful: of course they are regarded with decreasing reluctance and horror. The father practises them, and with his example corrupts the son. The husband in the same manner corrupts his wife; the brother his brother; the friend his friend; the neighbour his neighbour. Soon the brothel raises its polluted walls,

9. Which is the third reason for connubial fidelity?

1. What is evident from the passage just quoted?

* Lev. 20:10.

† Jer. 29:20—23.

‡ Mat. 19:3—6.

and becomes a seminary of Satan; where crimes are provided; taught; perpetrated; multiplied without number, and beyond degree; and, to a great extent, concealed from the public eye. To one of these caverns of darkness and death another succeeds, and another; until the city, and ultimately the whole land, becomes one vast Sodom. Lost to every thought of reformation, and to every feeling of conscience, *an astonishment, and hissing, of mankind*; a reprobate of heaven; it invokes upon the heads of its polluted inhabitants a new tempest of fire and brimstone. Morals, life, and hope, to such a community, have expired. They breathe, indeed, and move, and act; and, to a careless eye, appear as living beings. But the life is merely a counterfeit. They are only a host of moving corpses; an assembly of the dead, destined to no future resurrection. Disturbed and restless spectres, they haunt the surface of the earth in material forms, filling the sober and contemplative mind with alarm and horror, until they finally disappear, and hurry through the gloomy mansions of the grave to everlasting woe."

2. Fidelity, however, is not the only virtue comprehended in the marriage covenant. It requires affection of the highest and purest kind. Individuals united by holy wedlock should have but one feeling, one wish, and one effort; and that should be the reciprocation of love. To the man his wife should be his light, his joy, and the object of his tenderest solicitude; and to the wife her husband should be her solace, her glory, and the unceasing object of her reverence and affection. Their souls should be absorbed by one prevailing wish, and that should be to make each other happy in the Lord. "Husbands," saith an apostle, "love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man

2. Is fidelity the only virtue comprehended in the marriage covenant?

ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: for we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.”* And “wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore, as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.”†

3. The second relation existing in the domestic circle is parental. From this arise the duties of parents. These duties, though numerous in detail, are all comprehended in one, namely, the proper training of their children. Education, in the full meaning of the term, implies that system of culture, whether public or otherwise, which elicits and improves the capabilities of human nature; which calls into salutary exercise, and puts under proper discipline, the *intellectual*, *moral*, and *animal* faculties of man; imparting to him power for the *effective* and *graceful* accomplishment of the several duties, which, in the order of divine providence, may be incumbent on him to perform. Any thing less than this, however brilliant and fascinating in its nature and results, falls short of an adequate and finished education.‡

4. The obligations of parents to train up their children in the right way, arise from the effects of this action in reference to themselves, to their children, and their country, and from the requirements of God.

He that neglects the early and proper training of his children, will certainly be repaid with disobedience and unkind-

3. Which is the second relation existing in the domestic circle?

4. From what arise the obligations of parents to train up their children in the right way?

* Eph. 5:25, and on.

† Eph. 5:22—24.

‡ Preface.

ness ; will sooner or later feel, in its full force, "how sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have a thankless child." And, in his last hours, what will be his anguish, when knowing that his children will soon be left without a parent, without instruction, and without piety ; and that, owing to his delinquency, they will, not improbably, be lost forever ! Under such circumstances, with what feelings will he bid adieu to his afflicted children ! What can he say to sooth their agitated minds, and atone for his past neglect ? Can he exhort them to follow him as he had followed Christ, when he had not followed him at all ? Will not the recollections of his past unfaithfulness harrow up his feelings, and give to death a tenfold bitterness ? But the process of dissolution, with all its terrors, will be infinitely less oppressive than the day of judgment. Then will he behold his delinquency in all its consequences. He will receive the sentence of condemnation, not from his judge only, but also from his children : you are the cause, they will say, of our coming to this unhappy end. Had you prayed with us, instructed us in our faith and duty, and taught us by a good example how to live, we should not have died impenitent, and come to this place of suffering.

5. But while the neglect of parental duties is always attended with parental sufferings, the right performance of them seldom fails to be productive of different results. "Train up a child in the way he should go," says Solomon, "and when he is old he will not depart from it." This declaration undoubtedly was intended by the wise man to be understood with some limitation. That children brought up in the best possible manner, after the removal of parental restraint, have lapsed into vicious habits, is a position too evident to be denied. All, therefore, that he intended was, that if children are trained up in the right way, they will

5. What results from the right performance of parental duties ?

generally not depart from it. And, subject to this restriction, the declaration contains a truth as indisputable as it is important. Whatever may be the origin and laws of habit, it indubitably exerts over the human mind a prodigious influence. It is this which forms the character, controls the dispositions, and directs the movements of individuals and nations. Operating directly upon the most active and efficient principles of human nature, it not unfrequently assumes over them a paramount control. An early and proper training, aided by the influence of habit, will therefore seldom fail to realize the hopes of parents. They will have the happiness, generally, of seeing their children, in after life, exemplify those filial and tender virtues, which had been impressed upon them in their youth. Receiving from them all the attentions and affectionate assiduities their circumstances require, they will at length finish their protracted pilgrimage, and descend to the peaceful grave, under the benedictions and caresses of their offspring. Nor will they, in the final audit, only meet the approbation of their judge themselves, but have the unspeakable felicity of saying, "here I am, and the children thou hast given me."

6. And while the faithful performance of parental duties promotes the happiness of parents, it, in every way, contributes to the advantage of children. The well educated youth, under the ordinary blessings of a gracious providence, never fails to experience, in mind and body, the healthful influence of his early training. Like a scion, shooting from a vigorous stock, watered by a living stream, and nourished by a fertile soil, he retains, even in old age, the freshness and beauty of youth. Of the influence of a judicious and early training, in this respect, we have many proofs. We often perceive in the health of those who are mindful of the divine requirements in early life, and in that of those who are

6. Does the faithful performance of parental duties promote the happiness of children?

reckless of the laws of God, a marked and decided difference. The latter not unfrequently exhibit, at an early age, symptoms of a rapid decline. Their bodily functions are deranged, the faculties of their minds impaired; and, under the pressure of disease, they sink, in the morning of their life, into the silent grave.

7. Solomon, in describing the effects of wisdom, tells us, "that length of days and long life are in her hands;—that the fear of God prolongeth days; but the years of the wicked shall be shortened." That a forgetfulness of God, and a violation of his laws, tend to shorten life, is a truth as philosophical as it is obvious. The intemperance of the pleasure taker, the anxiety of the ambitious, the mortification of the spendthrift, and the anguish of the guilty, as certainly accelerate the progress of their dissolution as day succeeds night. Were the map of human existence now spread before us, we should behold wrecks of animated hopes, fragments of splendid projects, traces of daring deeds, and marks of lofty genius, all buried in promiscuous ruin by the recklessness of youth; should see the bones of disobedient children bleaching in foreign countries; hearts of widowed mothers bleeding over the memory of ungrateful sons; bereaved relatives pining in the recollection of prodigal friends; and whole kingdoms mourning over beloved but ruined citizens. It is now—and it always has been—and it will forever be a maxim of the divine government,—that the wicked shall not live out half their days.*

8. And while the early government of the intellectual and moral powers contributes to health and long life, it never fails to ensure respect. That a blind and intemperate zeal, in matters of religion, is not unfrequently mischievous and disreputable, we readily admit; but that in a christian coun-

7. What does Solomon say in respect to the effects of wisdom?

8. Does education insure respect?

* Ps. 55 : 23.

try, where the conscience is formed and governed by the laws of God, an humble and devout acknowledgment of the divine Being, and a prompt submission to his requirements, are calculated to injure the reputation is not possible. With but few exceptions, arising from a happy temperament and propitious circumstances, the impugner of the divine government is as wretched in his morals as he is defective in his faith. And that such an one, in a community of christians, should be much esteemed is not to be expected. In the possession of the finest talents, and the most abundant riches, if we are regardless of Him who made us, faithless to our own interests, and reckless of the rights of others, we, infallibly, shall be despised. This remark, which is true in regard to every one, is particularly so in reference to the young. We instinctively shudder at the exhibition of crime in youth, while we fold to our hearts, with feelings of delight, the one who indicates in early life a lofty and conscientious regard for duty. Nor will the case ever alter while human nature continues as it is. We are inclined naturally to prefer the humble to the arrogant; the liberal to the niggardly; the industrious to the indolent; the frugal to the extravagant; and the honourable to the mean. Hence says the wise man, "with all thy getting get understanding. Exalt her, and she shall promote thee; she will bring thee to honour, when thou dost embrace her. She will give to thine head an ornament of grace: a crown of glory shall she deliver thee.*"

9. While an early and conscientious performance of our duty seldom fails to conciliate esteem, it secures to us the promise of every other blessing. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness," saith Jesus Christ, "and *all* these things shall be added unto you."† Although chris-

9. Does a religious education secure the promises of God?

* Prov. 4: 7, 8.

† Mat. 6: 33.

tianity commands us to love not the world, nor the things that are in the world; it assures us that the "meek shall inherit the earth."* "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life which now is, and of that which is to come."† The habits and feelings of a pious man are peculiarly adapted to the attainment of earthly good. Industrious, honest, temperate, and economical, he, of all others, is the most likely to become easy in his circumstances. He is forbidden, it is true, from oppressing and overreaching his fellow-creatures; or, in any wise, doing unto them as he would not have them do unto him; yet he is permitted, and even commanded to pursue, in the most certain way of success, the maintenance and comfort of his family, under an assurance that God will prosper him in his basket and his store; and that whatsoever his hand doeth it shall prosper.

1. And while the tendency of an early and thorough education is to secure to us the blessings we have already noticed, it tends infallibly to strengthen the intellect.

2. Observation, analogy, and experience, all show that the mental faculties, like the organs of sensation, acquire strength in proportion to their exercise. Minds inured to the process of combination, abstraction, and comparison, are obviously more acute than those which have been unused to those operations. The productions of accomplished artists and of untutored Indians, are no more dissimilar in point of excellence than are their mental energies. Why did Aristotle, Plato, and Seneca acquire pre-eminence in abstract and metaphysical discussion? Because they had been trained, in early life, to efforts of this description. Why did Demosthenes and Tully possess the power to move, to rouse, and to captivate multitudes, courts, and senates? Because, under

1. Does education strengthen the intellect?

2. How is this fact proved?

* Mat. 5:5,

† 1 Tim. 4:8.

accomplished teachers, they had studied the arts of rhetoric and elocution; had, while their faculties were yet pliant, not only resorted to the portico, the grove, and the forum, but travelled in foreign countries, and by intense thought, and discriminating observation, improved their faculties for this purpose. Why, in later times, did Newton, Boyle, and Bacon, penetrating the arcana of nature, push their investigations to the boundaries of matter, and calculate the elements of stars? Because their minds, invigorated by exercise, acquired an activity that would not be confined to objects of less dimensions. Why did the minds of Chatham, Burke, and our own illustrious worthies of the revolution, penetrate the dark clouds of despotism, and discover, and hold up to view, with arguments not to be resisted, the just principles of civil government? Because they had been impelled, by the force of circumstances, to investigate and master these intricate topics. But specifications were endless: For the development of talent and mental greatness, in every instance, has been owing to circumstances, resulting in the production and classification of thought; and this, strictly speaking, is education, be the process by which they are acquired what it may. Nature furnishes the elements of greatness, but exercise and discipline impart to them consistency and form. Be the native vigour of a savage what it may, he can no more grapple with the energies of educated mind, than he can stay the tempest or direct the lightning. The intensely thoughtful, in every period, have acquired power that, for good or evil, has controlled the world. Such is the energy, produced by intellectual effort, that every thing, ultimately, submits to its government. The excitements of folly, and the deliriums of passion, all yield, in time, to the dominion of thought. Nor is the power of this agency limited to the social circle, but extends to the physical elements. By the force of mental discipline space has been annihilated, disease vanquished, civil liberty defined, the charter of sal-

vation explained, and nature herself put under contributions to man.

3. And while education, by concentrating and directing the mental faculties, imparts to them increased energy, it likewise extends the sphere of their operation.

4. This position, though intimately connected with the one we have just noticed, is nevertheless distinct from it. Intellectual strength, and intellectual range, may, or may not, co-exist in the same person. Be our native vigour what it may, it will, necessarily, be circumscribed without acquirements. Had the mind of Newton not been enlarged by education, his mental powers would, probably, have been restricted in their operations to the place of his nativity; but in consequence of early and thorough training they overleaped the limits of the world, and of the solar system, and traversed the fields of space. He not only took the dimensions of the sun, and demonstrated the elements of the planets, but extended his calculations to the stars, and the remote wanderings of the comet. Not exhausted by measuring the plane of the ecliptic, the orbits of the planets, and illustrating their multiform laws and motions, he pushed his investigations to other systems, and applied his mathematics to other suns. Orbs, rolling in boundless space, from whose surface, bodies, flying at the rate of four hundred miles per hour, would not reach the globe on which we live in six hundred thousand years, were subjected to his scrutiny. Notwithstanding the native imbecility of mind, it becomes, in virtue of proper training, in some sort, illimitable. By the light of history it becomes acquainted with the past; by analogy, and the aid of revelation, it acquires a knowledge of the future; and by mathematics, and the natural sciences, it discusses the laws and extent of the universe.

3. Does education extend the sphere of intellectual operation?

4. How is this fact proved?

5. Nor does education merely strengthen the intellect, and extend the sphere of its operation, but also multiplies sources of enjoyment.

6. To the mind illumined by science and the light of heaven, every thing in nature is a source of comfort. The earth, with its rugged mountains, extended plains, and fertile valleys; the ocean, with its placid surface, and destructive storms; the rivers, winding their healthful and refreshing courses to the mighty deep; and all the violent and gentle phenomena of nature; present objects interesting and delightful. Even in the retirement of the closet, surrounded by the winter's blast, and oppressed with the decrepitudes of age, the pages of inspiration, the beauties of eloquence, the labours of the artist, and the splendid triumphs of science, never fail to be sources of enjoyment. From the enchanting summit of Parnassus, and the gushing streams of Helicon, the genuine scholar derives unceasing and ineffable delight. Nor is his enjoyment diminished when he raises his contemplation to the beauties of the skies. Those massy orbs, whose magnitudes are more than twelve hundred thousand times greater than the globe on which we live, describing circles almost beyond the reach of thought, attracting lesser worlds around them as their common centres, exhibiting the phenomena of annual and diurnal motion, moving under the influence of forces, all eccentric and all harmonious,—excite and cherish in his bosom the sublimest feelings. One day spent in contemplating, as we ought, the stupendous structure and economy of nature, yields infinitely greater satisfaction than sensualists ever did, or ever can enjoy. Then it is

“The soul grows conscious of her birth celestial,
And feels at home among the stars.”

5. Does education multiply sources of enjoyment?

6. How is this fact proved?

7. The christian student, in tracing the pages of inspiration, discovers, in the brightest characters, the goodness of his Creator. He is assured that God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life; and from this assurance he derives a peace which the world can neither give nor take away. Reconciled to God through the merits of the cross, he receives the aid of his almighty grace, which enables him not only to pass in triumph the waves of this troublesome world, but to secure for himself, beyond the grave, an inheritance, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, eternal in the heavens. Here, then, is a source of happiness, unspeakable, and full of glory.*

8. Nor are the benefits of education confined to the individuals who receive and bestow it, but extend, indefinitely, to every portion of the community. He who gives to the public a well educated child is a benefactor to his country. The subject of that system of instruction which develops and improves his intellectual, moral, and animal faculties; which approximates him to his original excellence, and makes him, in some degree, what he ought to be, is, in point of usefulness, as much superior to the wandering Arab, or the untutored Indian, as the sun, in brightness, is superior to a taper. Spread before you the History of the World, and tell us where the benefactors of their race have lived. Has it been in the dark recesses of the forest, and under the conditions of savage life? or has it not been in the temples of science, the seats of learning, and the abodes of civilization and refinement? Who, we ask, have laid, in justice and equal rights, the foundations of civil governments? Who

7. What effect, upon the student, has reading the scriptures?

8. Are the benefits of education confined to this life?

* See Sermon on the Importance of Education, by the author.

have conducted, with benignity and success, the destructive and eventful operations of war? Who have founded scientific and literary institutions, and extended the facilities of moral and intellectual improvement from the palace to the cottage? Who have reared the standard of the cross, and carried to the burning sands of Africa, the inhospitable regions of Lapland, and the pestilential morasses of India, the consolations of pardon and salvation? Who have improved and multiplied the arts, spread a charm over the residence of man, and made the desert to bud and blossom as the rose? The answer is—*the educated*. They, in all ages, have been the benefactors of their species; the light of this benighted world; the salt of this polluted earth; and the solace of this vale of tears. An energy, growing out of their endeavours, united to the greater energy of the gospel, has extended to human beings all that is requisite to train the intellect, to adorn the heart, to delight the fancy, and to please the senses. Compare, for a moment, the history of an individual who has been properly improved by education with that of one who has never, in any sense, enjoyed its benefits. The former, with his mental and moral faculties trained to harmonious operation, is continually doing good. He feeds the hungry, clothes the naked, and gives drink to the thirsty. His energies are all directed to the common interest. In every enterprise, having for its object the general welfare, he is foremost. In extending knowledge, patronizing the arts, improving government, increasing the facilities of intercourse, invigorating commerce, developing the resources of his country, and adding to the triumphs of christianity, he is active and successful. But the unhappy one, who lives enveloped in his native darkness, whose mind, like the tangled wilderness, has never yielded to the hand of training and improvement, presents a picture exactly the reverse. Ignorant, selfish, and unamiable, he roams the solitary

forest, or haunts the sinks of dissipation, spending his days in idleness or unavailing labour, and at last dies unpitied and forgotten.

9. The effects of education on the public weal are such, that God, in every age, has regarded it with marked attention. "These words," said he, "which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart; and thou shalt *teach* them diligently unto thy children, and shalt *talk* of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates."* And St. Paul says, "Provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."†

1. The third relation existing in the domestic circle is *filial*. This comprehends the duties of children. These duties are all included in one word, namely, *obedience*. "Children," saith the apostle Paul, "obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right."‡

2. Filial obedience, in the first place, is urged by divine authority. "Ye," said God, to his ancient people, "shall fear every man his mother and father."§ And in the decalogue, "honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee.||

3. And these injunctions, like all others proceeding from the same source, are corroborated by the decisions of experience and enlightened reason.

9. What has God said respecting the education of youth?

1. Which is the third relation existing in the domestic circle?

2. How, in the first place, is filial obedience urged?

3. What is the nature of these injunctions?

* Deut. 6:6—9. † Eph. 6:4. ‡ Eph. 6:1. § Lev. 19:3. || Exo. 20:12.

4. Notwithstanding children, in the possession of strong feelings, animated hopes, and wayward wills, generally suppose themselves the best qualified to be their own counselors, experience has long since shewn that this is not the fact. They are placed in the midst of a novel, treacherous, and enticing world, without knowing the hazard to which they are exposed. All around them seems to be fresh and fair, while ruin is concealed beneath the scene. It is experience, and experience only, which can guide them in the path of safety, and this they have not. Governed by their impetuous spirits, beguiled by their imagination, urged onward by a confidence in their own powers, and intensely thirsting for the pleasures of the world, they are often, at an early period, involved in the greatest troubles. It is then proper that their parents, who have trodden the rugged paths of life, witnessed the deceitfulness of the human heart, and experienced the bitterness of their own folly, should be their counsellors. To these monitors, whose heads have been frosted by many winters; whose feelings have been chastened by long experience, and whose judgment has been matured by deep reflection, they should be attentive and obedient listeners. In them God has provided guides to direct their trembling feet, and to their instructions they should not be heedless.

5. Besides the pre-eminent qualifications of parents to instruct their children, they are entitled to peculiar confidence from the character of their affection. The purity and irrepressible energy of parental love, can be comprehended only by those who feel it. God, in illustrating the intensity of his kindness toward them who fear him, alludes to the ardour of maternal love. "Can," says he, "a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb?" No, she cannot. So long as nature remains unaltered at the fountain head, she will cling to her

4. How is this fact proved?

5. Which is the next reason for filial obedience?

helpless offspring. Deep in her bosom is implanted a tenderness of feeling, which time, nor circumstance can ever quench. Votaries of human glory may become indifferent to the praise of men; lovers of worldly pleasure abandon the object they have long pursued; the avaricious remit their pursuit of gold, and the chivalric forget their most sacred vows, but the parent can never become indifferent to the interests of his children. It is for them he toils, for them he prays, and for them he lives. If his children were blotted from existence, the universe, to him, would become a blank. His heart, which now beats with hope, and joy, and the animated feelings of paternal love, would wither into apathy.

6. Such affection, surely, is entitled to peculiar confidence. It claims the obedience of children upon the ground of their own interest. In the wishes of a parent there may, indeed, be ignorance, but there scarcely can be a want of kindness. Here there is no room for selfish and ungracious feelings. Their offspring being bone of their bone, and flesh of their flesh, it is impossible for parents to be reckless of their interest.

7. The parent's happiness is intimately dependent on the child's obedience. Had we the power to describe the poignancy of parental sufferings occasioned by the disobedience of ungrateful children, we should exhibit a precision and force in this remark never disclosed before. Possessing as parents do an absorbing solicitude for their children's welfare, they experience a consuming anguish in the event of disappointment. Often has the disobedience of a beloved child brought down the grey hairs of an affectionate parent with sorrow to the grave. In the narrow limits of our own acquaintance we not unfrequently behold the tombs of departed youths, whose career was prematurely terminated by their own folly, watered by the tears of broken-hearted parents.

6. What is such affection entitled to?

7. Which is the next reason for filial obedience?

The lamentation of David, "O my son Absalom! my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee! O Absalom, my son, my son!" is repeated by many a pining and dejected parent. And in cases much less aggravated, the undutiful conduct of children has produced in the parental bosom an overwhelming sorrow, a torturing apprehension, which death or reformation only can remove. On the other hand, the moral and pious conduct of children never fail to afford their parents the greatest happiness. The parental bosom, in hope of the prosperity of its tender charge, warms, expands, and overflows with joy. Heaven never bestowed upon human beings an earthly boon more productive of delightful feelings than children of an early, protracted, and continued promise. Often have we seen the tear of joy gather in the parent's eye, while beholding in his children's conduct the pledges of future greatness. This moment millions of human bosoms are swelling with the purest joy, in the anticipation of the future prosperity of their children; feeling that death itself would be less intolerable than a disappointment of their hopes.

O ye children, who are reckless of your filial duties, consider, we beseech you, the consequence. You plant daggers in the bosoms of your nearest friends; you strew their paths with the sharpest thorns; and accelerate, with unwonted haste, their passage to the tomb! Think upon their flowing tears; their bitter sighs; their sleepless nights; and henceforth comply with their requirements. Heaven has made you capable of producing the sweetest happiness, or imparting the bitterest misery to your parents; and surely you cannot hesitate a moment in selecting the alternative.

8. To disregard the authority of her who bore us; who watched over us in our tenderest years; taught our trembling feet to move aright, and our tongue to call her *mother*; to

8. What is the character of filial disobedience?

contemn the commands of him who provided for our early wants; prepared us, by his instructions, for future usefulness; and feels for us the affection of a *father*, is, in the estimation of every one, disgraceful. There is not; there cannot be among us a more odious and repulsive character than a thankless and disobedient child. The finger of scorn invariably points him out as the proper object of invective and contempt. Having ruptured the tenderest bonds of the social state; recklessly wounded the feelings of his best friends; and quenched in his own bosom the loveliest feelings of his nature, he is justly esteemed the foulest of the foul. Children who anticipate the wishes of their parents, comply with their requirements, long for the promotion of their happiness, rejoice in their prosperity, and mourn over their afflictions, are noticed with feelings of complacency by all around them. The tongue of eloquence bestows upon them the highest praise; the feeling heart renders them the most decisive homage; and the living and dying blessings of their parents afford them the richest consolation. But disobedient children are guilty of so many violations of propriety; so many departures from the path of virtue, and so many disruptions of the social ties, that, in the view of every serious and reflecting individual, they are odious and contemptible.

9. But this consideration, powerful as it is, is not the greatest one which urges children to obey their parents. It is a fact, sustained by the current of inspiration, that their present and eternal happiness, in no small degree, is dependent on the performance of this duty. Elementary in its nature, fruitful in its consequences, and emphatical in its enforcement as it is, it can never be neglected with impunity. Every motive that should operate on the human mind is presented to the view of children, to induce in them obedience

9. What other consideration urges children to obey their parents?

to their parents. They are assured, that in the performance of this duty they shall receive the blessing of their heavenly Father in the life which now is, and also in that which is to come; but that in the neglect of it, his chosen curses shall rest upon them in every period of their being. "God," we are told, "blesseth the habitation of the just; and that the house of the righteous shall flourish." Illustrative of this fact, it was said to the children of Jonadab, "Because ye have obeyed the commandment of your father, and kept all his precepts, and done according to all that he hath commanded you; therefore, thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel, Jonadab shall not want a man to stand before me forever."*

1. But while the holy scriptures abound with promises to obedient children, they exhibit the most awful denunciations against those who are disobedient. Under the law of Moses it was said, "He who smiteth his father or his mother shall surely be put to death." And the "eye," saith Solomon, "that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the raven of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it." Nor has the punishment of filial disobedience been mitigated by the introduction of the gospel. There is often seen, even in the present world, a peculiar manifestation of the divine displeasure toward those who had been disobedient to their parents. Abandoned by the holy spirit, and given up to the wickedness of their own hearts, they not unfrequently pursue a course ending in the ruin of their property, the injury of their reputation, and the premature extinction of their lives. And what is reserved for them in another world, the most lively imagination is incompetent to conceive. Could we raise the veil which hides eternity from our view, we should see disobedient children suffering the fiercest tortures of an unappeasable and condemning conscience.

1. How are disobedient children threatened?

* Jer. ch. 35.

2. The next relation existing in the domestic modification of society that we intend to notice is, that which subsists between *masters* and *servants*.

3. That the existence of these orders is agreeable to the will of God, is evident, not only from the facts that they are unavoidable and beneficial, but also from the manner in which they are recognized in the holy scriptures. An absolute equality in the constituents of any form of society is neither possible nor desirable. From the nature and constitution of a social compact, a variety of occupations necessarily follows; and to these occupations human beings will resort according to their capacity and adaptations. The division and appropriation of labour, coincident with inclination and talent, not only facilitate the accomplishment of business, but ensure the execution of it in the best manner.—Hence the scriptures, under every dispensation of divine grace, speak of masters and servants, and designate the duties of each order respectively.

4. Masters are bound to treat their servants not only with justice, but also with kindness: to abstain from irritating them by a haughty and overbearing demeanor, by reproachful and supercilious language, by indicating a peevish and fretful disposition toward them, by imposing upon them more than they can comfortably accomplish, and by withholding from them any portion of their due. “Masters,” saith an apostle, “give unto your servants that which is just and equal; forbearing threatenings, knowing that your master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him.”* And St. James exclaims, “Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back

2. Which is the next relation existing in the modification of society?

3. What proves this relation to be agreeable to the will of God?

4. How should masters treat their servants?

* Eph. 6: 9.

by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.”*

5. Masters are under obligations to treat their servants with kindness, because such treatment will improve the comfort and conduct of domestics, will increase their number, and consequently reduce their wages, will promote the interest, convenience, and comfort of masters, and thus contribute to the general welfare: for whatever promotes the happiness of a necessary portion of the community, promotes the interest and comfort of the whole.

6. On the other hand, it is the duty of servants to be obedient and faithful to their masters. “Servants,” saith an apostle, “be obedient to them that are your masters, according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; not with eye service, as men pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall be received of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.”†

7. In the enumeration of domestic duties we have not mentioned the obligation of slaves; because slavery, in our view, is inconsistent with morality. Persons captured in regular warfare may be retained in captivity, to prevent them from doing farther mischief; and individuals who have forfeited their liberty by violating the laws of their country, may be kept in prison, or at hard labour; but even in these cases the punishment of the delinquents should be no greater than is

5. Whence arise the obligations of masters to treat their servants with kindness?

6. What is the duty of servants to their masters?

7. Have we hitherto mentioned the duty of slaves?

* James 5: 4. † Eph. 6: 5—8.

consistent with the public good, and their own improvement. Slavery, however, in its ordinary acceptation, is utterly unjustifiable. Its tendency is wholly bad. It promotes in the master haughty and cruel feelings, indolent and dissipated habits, and renders the slave degraded, unhappy, and comparatively useless. It is at war with that great and fundamental principle of good morals, which requires every one to contribute to the utmost of his ability to the production of the greatest possible amount of human happiness. Whatever action conforms to this rule is moral, and whatever action does not conform to it is immoral.

8. The third modification of society is *ecclesiastical*. This involves the various duties of pastors and people, which are all comprehended in the zealous and judicious pursuit of the prosperity and welfare of the Christian institution. Every human being is under solemn and imperative obligations to contribute, according to his ability, to the extension and growth of the church of Christ. These obligations arise from the dignity of her origin—the cost of her establishment—the grandeur of her designs, and the efficiency of her operations.

9. The christian church originated not in the wisdom and power of human beings, but in the counsel of God. In proof of this point we have the most plenary and decisive evidence. “Upon this rock,” said Jesus Christ to Peter, “*I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*”* It matters not, in the present instance, what is the meaning of the term *rock*—whether it alludes to the person of Jesus Christ; to the merit of his death upon the cross; to the faith of the apostle Peter; or to any other circumstance: for be the basis of the church what it may, Jesus

8. Which is the next modification of society?

9. Which is the first reason for supporting the church?

* Mat. 16: 18.

Christ is the *builder*. On this rock, said he, *I build* my church. It is also said, that “The LORD *added* to the church daily such as should be saved.”* And St. Paul exhorted the elders of the church at Ephesus “To feed the church of God, which he had purchased with his own blood.”†

1. The church having originated, not in the dark ages of ignorance and superstition; not in the learning and prudence of human beings; not in the power of social and civil compacts; but in the wisdom and goodness of God, she is, on this account, entitled to our best regard. Instituted in the council of the adorable trinity; founded upon the rock of ages, and impressed with the signet of divine authority, she justly claims our vigorous and unceasing efforts to promote her welfare.

2. Nor are her claims, in this respect, less imperative, from the *cost* of her establishment. She was bought, not with the gold of Ophir and the cattle upon a thousand hills; not by holocausts of rams and rivers of oil; not by the treasures of the world and the flower of the first-born of creation—but with the precious blood of Christ.

3. Nor was this sacrifice the only expenditure in founding the church of God. The influence, the talents, and the lives of the best men, in all ages, and in all countries, have been offered upon the altar of her interest. At the stake, upon the scaffold, and upon the rack, the heralds of divine mercy have been martyred for the church of Christ. Requisitions upon the richest treasures of the universe have been, and now are, made for the benefit of our holy Zion. The son of God, the ministration of angels, divine providence, and the labours and lives of the most illustrious individuals, are all devoted to the accomplishment of this object. And surely

1. What follows from the above premises?
2. Which is the second reason for supporting the church?
3. Was this the only sacrifice made for the church?

* Acts 2: 47. † Acts 20: 28.

that, to which have been devoted, under the approval of divine wisdom, the resources of heaven and earth, is entitled to our hearty support.

4. Nor are liberal and affectionate contributions to the christian church less reasonable from the grandeur of her *designs*. These are, the promotion of the divine glory, and the happiness of human beings.

5. Previous to the founding of the church of Christ, the attributes of God, from the intense brightness of their glory, had remained inscrutable to human beings; but in this event they were embodied in the person of the mediator, and exhibited in mild and attractive radiance. Before the promise of Messiah the Deity had shewn himself only as the Creator and Preserver of the universe; but in the fulfilment of the promise he came forth, through the medium of his son, and unfolded to our lost and guilty race the unbounded riches of his grace in the character of a Redeemer. On the annals of the church is written in resplendent characters—"God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." And by the efficacy of this fact millions, in every age, have been brought to the worship of the true God, and of Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent.

6. Nor is the church intended to be the instrument merely of exhibiting the divine perfections, and thus promoting the glory of God; but also of contributing to the happiness of the human race. She is the appointed means of delivering us from the curse and degradation of the fall, and of restoring us to the favour and enjoyment of our Creator. In communion with the mystical body of Christ, we are assured that, from the unbounded riches of divine goodness, we shall receive grace to answer grace; that under the purifying in-

4. Which is the third reason for supporting the church?

5. Which is the first design of the church?

6. Which is the second design of the church?

fluence of the holy spirit we shall be transformed from glory into glory, till we are fitted for a translation from the church on earth to the church in heaven. It is ordained that our holy Zion, having accomplished her earthly destinies, shall be merged in the church triumphant, and that, around the throne of God, she shall partake of the richness of that salvation, for the dispensation of which she was first founded.

7. The designs of the church of Christ being the promotion of the glory of God and the happiness of human beings, she ought, surely, to be the object of our affectionate regard. The vigorous and lasting sentiment of our hearts should be, "Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I prefer not Jerusalem to my chief joy."

8. Nor will the reasonableness of this feeling be less apparent from a reference to the *efficiency* of the church of Christ in the promotion of human happiness. She, in all respects, is adapted to our circumstances, and is possessed of resources commensurate with our wants. Are we guilty and condemned? She refers us to a propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world. Are we in a state of ignorance and moral blindness? She spreads before us the records of wisdom and eternal life; and in a regular unbroken succession from the apostles provides us with Pauls and Apolloses, with Boanerges and sons of consolation for our instruction and improvement. Are we unholy and depraved? She secures to us the influence of the holy spirit to sanctify and make us holy. Are we fearful and desponding? She provides us with the sacraments of baptism and the lord's supper, as pledges of present grace and future happiness, if we receive them worthily. Are we in a state of sickness, sorrow and disappointment? She declares that every thing shall work together for our

7. What follows from the above premises?

8. Which is the fourth reason for supporting the church?

good if we love God, if we are the called according to his purpose. Are we mortal, and destined to the grave? she assures us that to die is gain; that in the presence of God there is fulness of joy, and that at his right hand there are pleasures forevermore. Do we dread the silence and corruption of the tomb? she scatters with a flood of light the clouds which hover on the grave, and discloses the certainty of our resurrection. Conducting us with safety to the verge of time, she draws aside the curtain of mortality, and discovers to us that glorious inheritance, which is incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for those who are faithful unto death.

9. From the efficiency of the christian church, in the promotion of human happiness, obligations to contribute to her prosperity inevitably follow.

1. If we are the subjects of true morality, we shall infallibly love the church of God. His worship, his sacraments, and all the ordinances of his house, will be delightful to our minds. Instead of neglecting his public service, or of grudging any efforts in our power to promote the interests of our holy Zion, or of disturbing her peace by a restless, wayward, and selfish course, we shall be ready at all times to sacrifice to her interest. The language of our hearts will be—"Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee. Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces. For my brethren and companions' sake I will now say peace be within thee."

2. The third modification of society is *political*.

3. That it is the duty of human beings to enter into civil

9. What follows from the above premises?

1. What will follow from possessing true morality?

2. Which is the third modification of society?

3. How is the institution of civil government proved to be agreeable to the will of God?

compacts, and to form laws for their own government, is evident alike from reason and revelation. "Judges and officers," said God unto his ancient people, "shalt thou make thee in all thy gates, which the Lord thy God giveth thee, throughout thy tribes: and they shall judge the people with just judgment."* And St. Paul says, "I exhort, therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our saviour."† Nor is this duty less indicated by reason than it is by the holy scriptures. Tending as the performance of it does to the protection of our person and property—to the encouragement of industry—the improvement of our social and intellectual nature—and the promotion of the general welfare, it must be agreeable to the will of God.

4. There are three distinct forms of civil government, namely, the monarchical, aristocratical, and republican.

5. A monarchical government is one in which the supreme power is lodged in the hands of a single person. The same name, however, is sometimes given to a government in which the power of the king or supreme magistrate is limited by a constitution, or by fundamental laws. Such is the British monarchy.

6. An aristocratical government is one in which the whole supreme power is vested in the principal persons of state; or in a few men distinguished for their rank and opulence. When the supreme power is exercised by a very small number, the government is called an oligarchy. The latter

4. How many forms of civil government are there?

5. What is a monarchical government?

6. What is an aristocratical government?

* Deut. 16:18.

† 1 Tim. 2:1—3.

word, however, is usually applied to a corrupted form of aristocracy.

7. A republican government is one in which the supreme power is lodged in the hands of the people collectively, or in which the people exercise the powers of legislation by their representatives. Such is the government of the United States of America.

8. The advantages of a monarchical government are—unity of council—decision—despatch—the preventing, by a known rule of succession, all competition for the supreme power. The dangers of a monarchy are—tyranny—expense—military domination—risk of the character of the sovereign—ignorance of the government of the interests of the people—and the want of wholesome laws.

9. The advantages of an aristocracy are—experience—education—and weight of character in the governors. The dangers of an aristocracy are—dissentions among the rulers—oppression of the lower orders of the people by the higher order—and partial laws.

1. The advantages of a republican government are—liberty—equal laws—regulations adapted to the wants of the people—public spirit—frugality—averseness to war—stimulus to patriotism—the pursuit of information—courtesy, &c. The dangers of a republican government are—dissentions—tumults—factions—inordinate ambition—intrigue—delay—imbecility—and anarchy.

2. People are bound to adopt that form of government, which, upon the whole, is most likely to produce the greatest amount of happiness; and it is the right of a majority of them concerned to decide what that form is.

7. What is a republican government?

8. Which are the advantages and dangers of a monarchy?

9. Which are the advantages and dangers of an aristocracy?

1. Which are the advantages and dangers of a republican government?

2. What form of government are we bound to adopt?

3. Civil government necessarily involves the relation of governed and governing.

4. It is the duty of the governing to make laws, and to execute them for the single purpose of promoting the public welfare. "He," saith David, "that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God."* And, saith the Lord, "execute ye judgment and righteousness, and deliver the spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor: and do no wrong, do no violence to the stranger, the fatherless, nor the widow, neither shed innocent blood in this place."† The faithful performance of these duties will afford peace to the conscience of the rulers—gratify their benevolent feelings—promote human happiness—and lead to their advancement by conciliating public confidence.

5. It is the duty of the governed to select the best qualified men for their public functionaries, to render them due respect while in the performance of their duty, and to reward them liberally for their services. "Let," saith an apostle, "every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever, therefore, resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience' sake. For, for this cause pay ye tribute also: for

3. What does civil government necessarily involve?

4. What is the duty of the governing?

5. What is the duty of the governed?

* 2 Sam. 23:3.

† Jer. 22:3.

they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render, therefore, to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour."* And a compliance with the divine requirements in this instance, as well as in every other, will contribute to our immediate advantage. It will insure a wholesome administration of government; peace and quietude among the people, and consequently the prosperity of the commonwealth.

6. The maintenance of civil government requires the enactment of laws: because harmony is essential to the public welfare, and, owing to the ignorance and selfishness of man, there can be no harmony without laws: and many of the forms of government, and the duties which they impose, being necessarily adventitious, they require enactments to explain them.

7. Laws, as they exist in most countries, are two-fold,—common law and statute law. Common law consists of custom, or the adjudications of authorized tribunals; and statute law, or the enactments of legislatures.

8. All law is, or ought to be, founded on justice and equal rights.

9. "Rights," says archdeacon Paley, "are either natural or adventitious; alienable or unalienable; perfect or imperfect."

1. Natural rights are those rights which we possess by nature: as the air we breathe, the fruit we raise, and the produce of our own labour.

2. Adventitious rights are those rights which arise from

6. What does the maintenance of civil government require?

7. What is the ordinary division of the laws?

8. What should all law be founded on?

9. How are rights classified?

1. What are natural rights?

2. What are adventitious rights?

* Rom. 13:1—7.

adventitious circumstances ; as one man has a right to the labour of another, because he has paid for it ; and a woman has a right to the protection of her husband, because he has engaged to protect her.

3. Alienable rights are those rights which may be bought and sold ; as rights to lands and tenements.

4. Unalienable rights are those rights which cannot be bought and sold ; as entailed estates, and one's own liberty and life.

5. Perfect rights are those rights which may be enforced by human laws ; as the right to property, protection from assault, &c.

6. Imperfect rights are those rights which are enforced by the law of God, but cannot be enforced by human laws ; as gratitude for favours, obedience to parents, good intentions, &c.

7. The laws of the land, whether they be founded in reason, in scripture, in the exigencies of individuals, or in any other circumstance, if they be not in contravention to the constitution, or the public welfare, ought to be obeyed. The observance of these laws being necessary to the maintenance of civil government, and the maintenance of civil government being necessary to the public welfare, and the public welfare being consistent with the will of God, and the will of God being the source of obligation, the observance of these laws must be obligatory.

3. What are alienable rights ?

4. What are unalienable rights ?

5. What are perfect rights ?

6. What are imperfect rights ?

7. How is it shewn that we should obey the laws of the land ?

CHAPTER III.

Of the duties which we owe to ourselves.

1. We are bound by the constitution of our nature, and by that of the universe, to act in such a manner as will, upon the whole, secure to ourselves, and to all with whom we are connected, the greatest possible amount of happiness. From this source arise all the duties which we owe to ourselves.

2. But to attain the highest possible amount of happiness we must acquire the greatest possible improvement. All the faculties of our nature must be approximated, by proper discipline, to the highest point of excellence of which they are susceptible. God, in their organization, has ordained that our enjoyments shall be exactly commensurate with the excellence of our acquirements. Precisely in proportion to the perfection of our moral principle, and its salutary control over our physical and intellectual powers, will be our happiness in this life, and in that which is to come.

3. That it is incumbent on us, by every means in our power, to seek the improvement of our physical functions is evident from the slightest reflection. The sound and vigorous operation of our bodily faculties, the full enjoyment of health, and the manly and graceful performance of the several parts assigned us by divine providence, evidently contribute alike to our own happiness and to that of our fellow creatures. The supposition, which not unfrequently obtains, that the training of our bodily faculties to a healthy and graceful operation is unworthy of our attention, is not only not true, but highly mischievous. Such is the connexion of mind and body, that if the vigour and gracefulness of the latter are neglected, the interests of the former will proportionably suf-

1. What is the rule of the duties we owe to ourselves?
2. What results from this rule?
3. Are we bound to improve our physical nature?

fer. To young people a due attention to gymnastics, callisthenics, and the exercises of the toilet are indispensable. If a diamond of the first water be worthy of the labours of the lapidary to bring it to a state of brilliancy and perfection, the body, which is infinitely more valuable, must be entitled to our best efforts to improve it.

4. In a still greater degree, however, the culture of the intellectual faculties claim our attention.

5. Our future and eternal destiny, depending upon the character of our present pursuits, these pursuits should comprehend, in degree at least, the *highest order of excellence*. Situation contributes much less to respectability, than power and disposition to adorn it. It is excellence—distinguished excellence in our avocations, whatever those avocations may be, that will secure to us the approval of our judge, and the regard of our fellow men. Inferior, or even ordinary attainments, ought not, by any means, to be the summit of our wishes; but fixing our eyes upon a lofty mark, we should pursue it with our whole strength.

6. To insure success in this course, application is indispensable. The delusive hope that genius, or any other circumstance, however propitious in its general tendencies, can supply the place of industry, ought not for a single moment to be cherished. It is labour, incessant labour only, that can result in the accomplishment of our wishes. Were we in possession of the brightest and strongest intellect ever possessed by a human being, we should ultimately become the victims of disappointment were we reckless of its improvement. A slothful youth, whatever may be his expectation from his parents, is destined to a lowery morning, a cloudy noon, and a stormy night. Without entering into a critical analysis of mind, it will not be difficult to shew that genius

4. Are we bound to improve our intellectual nature?
5. At what degree of improvement should we aim?
6. Is application essential to improvement?

and a sound judgment are not inseparably connected. Quick perception, and a lively sensibility, are the basis of genius; but a sound judgment is produced only by mental discipline. The individual who, under favourable circumstances, *thinks* most, will generally possess the soundest discrimination. Genius without judgment is like a bark tossed upon the bosom of an ocean, without rudder, and without ballast. It may excite the admiration of the ignorant for a short period, but it will ultimately perish in difficulties of its own forming. The career of the most splendid mind, unimproved by application, has always terminated unhappily. It is labour—ardent and unceasing labour only—that will secure to any individual intellectual distinction, and prosperity in his calling. Knowledge, at least that of the useful kind, dwells upon the summit of a lofty hill, and it is impossible to ascend thither without effort. This it is that

“Plucks bright honours from the pale-fac’d moon,
Or dives into the bottom of the deep,
Where fathom line could never touch the ground,
And drags up drowned honours by the locks.”

7. But to render application successful, much self denial is indispensable. The road to learning is not the primrose path of pleasure. A dalliance in this flowery way will inevitably weaken our mental vigour, and render abortive our most strenuous efforts. In the successful pursuit of knowledge, an intellectual sternness, an abstraction from the soft and bewitching enjoyments of sense, are absolutely necessary. The effects of sensual blandishments upon a tender mind, as described by an eminent master of human nature, ought forever to deter us from yielding to their influence. “I discerned,” saith Solomon, “a young man void of understanding. He passed through the street, near the dwelling of a woman of a subtle heart. He went after her,

7. Is self denial necessary to intellectual improvement?

straight as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks, till a dart strike through his liver; and as a bird hasteth to the snare, and knoweth not it is for his life."

8. Self denial, accompanied with the most assiduous application, will, however, be unavailing without *system*. This, in the pursuit of distant and retiring objects, is essential to success. The individual who is controlled by impulse and accident may engage in self improvement, but in it he will not succeed. He will commence, remit, and resume his efforts, but his object will not be accomplished. To ensure favourable results, nothing should be left to accident, but every thing should be done at the proper time, and in the proper manner. System in our mental arrangements is all important to success. The individual who possesses this, even in the absence of great acquirements, will, under the ordinary blessings of divine providence, seldom be disappointed.

9. To system must be added *perseverance*. "Perseverance overcometh all things," is a maxim which, with some modification, has been corroborated by the experience of all ages. An individual, we are told, who had long been unsuccessful in every enterprise, at length abandoned himself to inactivity and despair. Happening, however, while in this condition, to witness the unsuccessful efforts of an ant in raising his provision to the summit of his little cell, he resolved to await the result of his perseverance; and after counting upwards of a hundred failures, had the satisfaction of seeing him successful. This inspired the spectator with a resolution to try, in his own case, the effects of perseverance; and he did try it, with entire satisfaction. Nor is there an individual any where who may not, under the ordinary blessings of divine providence, succeed in some use-

8. Is system necessary to self improvement?

9. What should we add to system?

ful, if not brilliant, acquirement. The prize of usefulness and fame is not reserved merely for men of genius and easy circumstances, but chiefly for the persevering. The active, in defiance of allurements to ease; the intrepid, in spite of dangers and disasters; and the sanguine, notwithstanding repeated disappointments, will always move onward in the path of glory, and ultimately be rewarded with success.*

1. To these things, in the improvement of our intellect, we should add a judicious *selection* of topics for examination—a habit of *steady* and *continuous* attention to the subjects of investigation—of not relinquishing the process of examination until we understand the subject of it in all its elements and relations—of classifying the objects of our notice with great care and minuteness—and of intensely exercising our judgment in analysing, combining, and comparing the matters of our scrutiny.

2. Above all, however, we should aim at the improvement of our moral powers. “Keep thy heart,” saith Solomon, “with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.”†

3. Keeping the heart, in the language of the holy scriptures, implies a rigid and impartial scrutiny of its character—a prompt and faithful guarding of it from every evil—and a rigorous reduction of it, in all its operations, to the will of God.

4. So intricate and deceptive is the human heart, that it is only by the strictest scrutiny we can ascertain its character. Inspiration declares it is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, and that without divine assistance it is impossible to know it. We hazard nothing in the assertion that every human being is more or less ignorant of his

1. What else is necessary to improve the intellect?
2. Are we bound to improve our moral nature?
3. What is implied in keeping the heart?
4. What is the first thing implied in keeping the heart?

* See Sermon on Education, by the author. † Prov. 4:23.

own heart. That which is often taken for religious seriousness is induced only by disappointment; our liberality in almsgiving is not unfrequently excited by the love of praise; our activity in projects of benevolence by the hope of gain; our zeal in promoting the prosperity of the church by feelings of sectarianism; our attendance on public worship by the custom of the country in which we live; and our alienation from the world by misanthropy and distrust. So insidious and deceiving are the feelings of the human heart, that they can be detected only by an anxious, persevering, and thorough analysis of its motives. Hence saith an apostle, "Examine yourselves, prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?"*

5. But a knowledge of the heart simply is not sufficient; we must anxiously guard it against every evil—must, like faithful sentinels, be ever on the watch, not permitting even the shadow of an enemy to approach unseen. "What I say unto you," said Jesus Christ, "I say unto all, watch."† It is only this wakeful and faithful vigilance; this anxious and trembling solicitude to preserve ourselves unspotted from the world, that will protect us from the greatest evil. That temerity which loiters upon the verge of innocence, will ultimately land upon the territory of crime. He that *walks* in the counsel of the ungodly, and *stands* in the way of sinners, will finally *set down* in the seat of the scornful.‡

6. But even this is not sufficient; we must reduce our whole heart, in all its operations, to the will of God. The appetites, emotions, and passions must all be directed to proper objects, and the intensity of their operations graduated by the value of those objects. The excited and conflicting

5. What is the second thing implied in keeping the heart?

6. What is the third thing implied in keeping the heart?

* 2 Cor. 13:5.

† Mark 13:37.

‡ Ps. 1:1.

elements of the mind must all be reduced to harmony, and restrained by the dictates of reason and revelation. The glorious gospel of the blessed God, exerting over our moral faculties its salutary power, must cast down the imaginations, and every high thing which exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.*

7. This rigorous and impartial scrutiny; this solicitous guarding against the approach of evil; this wakeful and unremitting control of our moral faculties, are all comprehended in the government of the heart. Indeed the whole system of practical duties is not unfrequently represented by the inspired writers as being included in this duty. "Cleanse first," saith Jesus Christ, "that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also;"† and he pronounced a heavy curse upon the scribes and pharisees for pursuing a different course.

8. This duty of keeping the heart, according to the wise man, is to be performed with all "*diligence.*" And the direction is in perfect accordance with reason and revelation. Every passage of holy scripture, descriptive of self-government, represents it as being exceedingly difficult to perform. "*Strive,*" says Jesus Christ, "to enter into the straight gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." And saith an apostle, "*Fight* the good fight of faith, that ye may lay hold of eternal life." To exterminate the old man—to reduce the appetites, affections, and passions to the law of God—to resist successfully the suggestions of the wicked one—and to exercise over our entire nature a vigorous and wholesome discipline, is a work requiring the utmost diligence.

7. Are all these things necessary to the government of the heart?

8. How is this self government to be performed?

* 2 Cor. 10:5.

† Mat. 23:26.

9. Nor is this fact less evident from the circumstances under which we are placed. The world sometimes appears to us in bright and attractive forms, and at other times in dark and repulsive aspects. What it cannot accomplish by allurements and artifice, it attempts by open menace and hostility. So repugnant is the world to the interests of true religion, that Christ says, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon;" and St. John assures us, that "if we love the world, the love of the Father is not in us." And while the things which are in the world naturally tend to alienate our affections from their proper objects, the people who are of the world contribute to the same result. Their tastes, their maxims, and their examples, are all hostile to the spirit of the cross. Hence saith an apostle, "Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God."*

1. To traverse the dark and threadless mazes of the heart; to strip it of its insidious and seductive guise; to detect the character of its hidden and complicated motives; to bring to gospel light the interior and secret movements of the soul, require efforts of no ordinary kind. "Ye know not," said the redeemer to his disciples, "what manner of spirit ye are of." Although they had been instructed by his own lips, and had, in some measure, imbibed his own spirit, they were still, in a high degree, ignorant of their own hearts. And the same remark is of general application. The wrong estimate we form of our own character; our inclination to condemn in others that of which we are ourselves guilty; and the almost transparent deceptions we daily practice upon our own conscience, incontrovertibly prove that we are strangers

9. How does the necessity of diligence farther appear?

1. What other considerations shew the importance of diligence in self government?

* Rom. 12:2.

at home. "Know thyself," is a precept of such importance, that its origin, even in the heathen world, has been attributed to inspiration. The attainment of that knowledge which frees us from the dominion of the passions, and exercises over us a salutary control, requires greater diligence than the acquirement of every other science besides. "He who ruleth his own spirit is greater than he who taketh a city."

2. It is true, that in the constitution of different individuals there is a great variety of temperament; and in some there is naturally more amiability than there is in others; but in every one there are tendencies to evil of some sort or other; and the subjugation of those tendencies is with great difficulty accomplished. We all have a full portion of infirmity; and the proper management of that infirmity, under exciting circumstances, demands unceasing diligence. Often have we resolved so to guard against our besetting sins as effectually to resist their influence, but before we were aware of danger, the enemy, like a mountain torrent, had swept from us our resolutions. Innocence, virtue, and self government, were all destroyed in a single moment, and we left, in the language of St. Paul, to exclaim, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death?"

3. In consonance with these reasons for diligence in the establishment of self government is that variety of means which is prescribed for its attainment. Reading the holy scriptures, hearing the gospel preached, receiving the holy sacraments, watchfulness, prayer, and the whole system of christian duties, are prescribed for our use in the pursuit of this acquirement. Had God designed that the government of our heart should be obtained without effort, the use of so many means would not have been required. The institution of these means, and the requirement to use them, therefore,

2. What else is said to shew the importance of diligence?

3. What farther consideration shews the importance of diligence in self government?

prove the necessity of diligence. It is not the possession of inoperative wishes, the folding of our hands, and saying, a little more sleep, a little more slumber, nor even intermittent and irregular efforts, that will secure to us the government of the heart, but only patient, solicitous, and persevering efforts.

4. That the feelings and dispositions of the heart have an intimate and universal influence upon our temporal and eternal interests, no one will deny. They affect alike our reputation, our individual enjoyment, and the general interest.

5. He who, amid the adversities and tumults of life, maintains the government of his heart, stands pre-eminently respected among his fellows. The even tenor of his mind, in defiance of the trials through which he passes, throws around him a sublimity and glory which the pomp and circumstance of power can never equal. Fresh and fadeless as the laurels are which are twined around the brow of him who conducts his warriors to triumph and to glory, the individual who conquers his own heart, and sways the sceptre of reason over his own feelings, is, in the view of God and man, infinitely more honourable. Neither wealth, nor power, nor any of the adventitious distinctions of human beings, can, under any circumstances, secure to our reputation, even in the view of mortals, that bright and enduring lustre which results from the government of the heart. Be our artificial distinctions what they may, our moral qualities will be the criterion by which we shall be estimated. No one can more effectually degrade himself than to yield, without resistance, to his appetites and passions. Surrendering as he does the dignity of human nature, he descends to a level with the beasts that perish. It is the purity and harmony of the inner

4. Has the character of the heart any influence on our temporal and eternal interests?

5. Does self government add to our respectability?

man, and not the vapourings of adventitious and affected dignity, that constitute real and enduring glory.

6. Nor can it be denied that the feelings and dispositions of the heart are the elements of happiness or misery. Language cannot describe the agony and bitterness of mind which result from the want of self government. Envy pining at the prosperity of others—malice forming its mazy plans for the ruin of its hated objects—anger like the fire of a burning mountain, feeding upon its own substance—pride irritated and mortified in not receiving its demanded homage—ambition in its restless efforts pulling down disgrace upon its own head—and avarice, seeking, obtaining, and never being satisfied, constitute the very essence and prelude of hell. But in governing the heart with all diligence, we realize that the work of righteousness is peace, and that the effect of righteousness is quietness and assurance forever;—that all the weapons of our enemies fall harmless at our feet, because we are armed with the panoply of God.

7. Were the heart, in every instance, governed as it ought to be, a new and glorious era would dawn upon the world. The wolf would dwell with the lamb, and the leopard lie down with the kid; the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together, and a little child would lead them, and all would be peace, and harmony, and happiness.

8. On the proper maintenance of self government the acceptableness of our whole conduct depends. The motives, feelings, and movements of the heart constitute, in the sight of God, our moral character. For internal obliquity no external performance can atone. It is the pure heart, the soul regulated in its perceptions, affections, and volitions, by the gospel of Jesus Christ, that render acceptable in the sight of

6. Are the feelings and dispositions of the heart the elements of happiness or misery?

7. What would be the effect of self government were it universal?

8. What depends on self government?

God our outward conduct. In the day of final judgment the enquiry will not be, what professions we had made, nor what name we had borne, but what purity of heart we had acquired, and what measure of the divine nature we had possessed; and on the answer to these questions will hang our eternal destiny.

9. To every one who is in the habit of reflecting upon the effects of self government it is evident that it contributes to our health. The great secret of acquiring and perpetuating the enjoyment of this blessing is moderation. The individual who abstains from self indulgence does more, by this means, to repair a dilapidated constitution, or to add vigour to one that is already robust, and to prolong his days, exempt from decrepitude and sickness, than all the medicines in the world can accomplish. It has been often remarked, by those who are the best qualified to form a correct opinion upon the subject, that intemperance has been more destructive of human life than war and pestilence united: and so far as our own observation has extended, it justifies the remark. The excessive use of meats and drinks not only impairs the digestive organs, produces a derangement of the nervous system, and lays the foundation of biliary and paralytic complaints, but often results in premature death. So rapid is the decay of the health and constitution of the intemperate, that their speedy dissolution is looked for as a matter of course. The pale or empurpled countenance, the weeping and inflamed eye, the tremulous and decrepit limbs, the sombre and depressed spirits, and the various ailments which follow in the train of excessive indulgence, proclaim, in language not to be controverted, its unfriendliness to the functions of the human system. Were it possible, under existing circumstances, to doubt the correctness of this position, even skepticism would no longer resist the demonstration of its

9. Does self government contribute to health?

accuracy, could we open the sepulchres of the dead, and there disclose, in their true colours, the ravages of intemperance!

1. Nor is the government of our hearts less friendly to the formation of industrious habits than to a sound and healthy constitution. He who eats and drinks merely to support nature, and not to pamper her appetites and passions, will seldom fail to be industrious. The vigour and elasticity of his spirits will induce habits honourable to himself and beneficial to mankind. Who, we ask, are the men of enterprize? who contribute to the improvement of their neighbourhood and their country? Who foster and extend the sciences and the arts? The answer is, the *temperate*. They only are the individuals of active and daring enterprize; the persons who encounter perils, subdue the elements, strike out large and comprehensive plans of amelioration, and make the wilderness and solitary places glad, and the deserts to rejoice and blossom as the rose.

2. Individuals who become intemperate instantly cease to be industrious. Every thing with which they are surrounded suffers from inattention. Their farm is left uncultivated, their counting house is forsaken, the interest of their family is neglected, and all their intellectual, moral, and physical concerns bear the aspects of neglect and desolation. "I went by the field of the slothful," says the wise man, "and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; and lo! it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down. Then I saw and considered it well; I looked upon it and received instruction. Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep; so shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man."

1. Is self government friendly to industry?

2. What is the effect of intemperance in regard to industry?

3. Nor is intemperance less hostile to economy than it is to industry. The virtues are all social in their nature; and where one flourishes the others will not languish. But between temperance and economy there is a special connexion. We perceive, accordingly, in almost every instance, in the concerns of him who is temperate in all things, decency, order, and economy, while the reverse of this is the fact in reference to the intemperate. Nearly all the calamities which bear upon our wretched race result from the indulgence of the passions and appetites. Houses of correction, prisons, tribunals for adjusting litigation, and all the institutions in aid of public morals, bear testimony to the truth of this assertion. In the black and revolting calendar of human crimes, intemperance stands out with peculiar prominence, as the parent of improvidence and misery. Nothing is more common than to see the opulent and happy reduced by the intemperate indulgence of their appetites to extreme want and misery. One instance, out of ten thousand which might be given, must suffice to illustrate the evil consequences of yielding to the propensities of our fallen nature. An individual who was in the possession of great wealth, of shining talents, and of high respectability, seemed to perfect his earthly happiness by a union with one who was in all respects worthy of his heart. All radiant with smiles and beauty, she gave her hand to him who promised in his character and circumstances to be all that she desired. In a large and brilliant circle there was not a single heart that did not anticipate the most happy results from this seemingly auspicious union. But they were disappointed. The object and centre of their hopes became intemperate; and ere the lapse of many years, from a state of affluence, he was reduced to abject poverty. The wife, the ornament of human nature, and her children, helpless, young, and full of promise, were plunged into hope-

3. Is intemperance hostile to economy?

less misery; and after enduring unutterable anguish for many years, were doomed to witness, in the wretched author of their sufferings, a forfeiture of his guilty life to the violated laws of his country. In this catastrophe, who can imagine the sufferings of a devoted wife; the agony and degradation of impoverished children; the remorse and self-reproach of the unhappy culprit; and the disappointment of his friends and the whole community? Yet this, and more than this, was accomplished by the intemperate indulgence of the appetites.

4. Nor is this practice less hostile to the intellect than it is to industry and economy. Its influence upon the mental functions is absolutely destructive. He that would have a clear perception, a sound judgment, and a rich imagination, must be temperate in all things. The inordinate use of strong drink, even in the limited circle of our own acquaintance, has, in numerous instances, destroyed the most splendid intellect, and reduced to weakness and inanity minds of the most towering greatness. The sad results of intemperance, in reference to an individual with whom we had long been acquainted, we shall never cease to lament. With a perspicacity that seemed to penetrate at once the abstruseness of every science, a mental energy that managed, without an effort, the whole system of ratiocination, a fancy that like a rainbow shed upon every subject of his discussion the whole variety of embellishments, and a taste cultivated to the highest degree of refinement, he stood alike in the senate, at the bar, and in the drawing room, pre-eminent among the greatest. But alas! this ornament of human nature; this giant of intellect; this resplendent meteor of the moral world, lost, in a short period, all of which he had once boasted. In becoming intemperate, he fell from the high and commanding position he had once occupied, to the level of a brute. He became an object, loathing to the taste, and repugnant to the

4. Is intemperance injurious to the intellect?

heart; a wreck of his former greatness, and a monument of his past folly.

5. And while intemperance is destructive to the intellect, it is equally injurious to the passions. It gives to them a rapid and factitious growth, pregnant with the greatest mischief. Operating on the temper, through the medium of the organic functions, it becomes physically and permanently disordered. The most lovely and attractive dispositions, in consequence of the stimulus of ardent spirits, and the long and complicated train of maladies which that stimulus produces, become intolerably perverted. In this respect, intemperance not unfrequently operates a total revolution; making the most lovely and best of individuals the worst. The tenderest ligaments of the social circle, the dearest connexions of domestic life, and the loveliest feelings of human nature, are all ruined by the passions which are excited by intemperance. Under the government of these passions the father is not unfrequently arrayed against the son, the husband against the wife, and the companion against his friend. Those who would otherwise live together in harmony, are often, in consequence of intemperance, involved in all the horrors of confusion worse confused. The destructive influence of this indulgence seems, in the course of a few months, to work miracles. Individuals who had long lived a moral and exemplary life, before they are aware of danger, become the victims of the most disgusting passions. Irritability, lasciviousness, the love of gaming, and all the mean and disgusting passions which agitate the human bosom, not only exist, but grow with rankness in their polluted souls. They are filled with all manner of uncleanness; with almost every thing which degrades, and stamps with brutality their fallen nature. In the emphatic language of holy writ, "their whole head is sick and their whole heart faint."

5. Is intemperance injurious to the passions?

6. The frightful and terrific ruins of intemperance are impressed not only upon the broad wastes of time, but upon the enduring ages of eternity. In every direction we behold the wreck of talents, of extensive fortunes, of reputation, of domestic happiness, of individual enjoyment, and of what is infinitely more terrible, the prelude to everlasting ruin. Here we behold broken-hearted mothers, distressed and forsaken children, beggared and deserted wives, inflamed and aggravated maladies, yawning and devouring graves—and there, just beyond the brink of time, we see the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, the gnawing worm that never dies, and the consuming wrath which is destined to rage forever, connected with the intemperate.

7. In the view of these things, every individual ought to be disposed to contribute by his example, his influence, and every means in his power, to the suppression of intemperance. Respecting the propriety of this measure there cannot be a dissenting voice. All who regard their own interest, the welfare of their fellow creatures, and the prosperity of their country—who are solicitous to cherish the influence of true religion in the present life, and to enjoy its benefits in that which is to come, must be anxious to arrest the progress of that evil, which, but a few years since, threatened not only the prosperity of our beloved country, but likewise that of the world. Such was the prevalence of this evil, that the patriot, the philanthropist, and the christian, became alarmed at the prospects which lay before; and rising in simultaneous effort to arrest its progress, have, under the blessings of divine providence, effected in the public sentiment a revolution infinitely more conducive to the public welfare than the most brilliant military achievements could have been. In the long and splendid list of recent enterprises, scarcely any one is more contributive to the general welfare, than the conception,

6. Do the bad effects of intemperance extend to another world?

7. What results from a view of these things?

development, and prosecution of the plan for promoting temperance, by enlisting the public sentiment in its favour.

8. But the government of the heart, in the full sense of that expression, signifies not only a restrained and moderate indulgence of the appetites and passions, but a cultivated avidity for heavenly things; an ardent and ceaseless hungering and thirsting for righteousness. It comprehends not only the crucifying of the old man, and the lusts thereof, but also the putting on of the new man, which is renewed in righteousness and true holiness; the setting our affections on things above, and not upon things below; or in other words, the feelings of David which prompted the exclamation, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee."*

9. Strictly speaking, the selection of God for our portion comprehends the whole of the duties which we owe to ourselves. This portion is alike congenial with our nature, and commensurate with our capacities. Surviving the vicissitudes of life, it will defy the mouldering touch of time, behold, unaltered, the last throb of expiring nature, and remain through eternal ages undiminished and immutable. Our enjoyments are now limited and transitory: they pass away as the morning cloud and as the early dew. During the brief period of our present life, what losses have we sustained! what desolations have we experienced! Acquaintances fresh and blooming as the early rose have descended to the land of silence; our children, once laden with the richest promise, are now sleeping in the dust; and friends still dearer to our hearts are numbered with the dead! O time! thou spoiler of human happiness, how hast thou ravaged our possessions! Truly have we realized with the

8. Does the government of the heart imply an avidity for heavenly things?

9. What, strictly speaking, does the government of the heart imply?

* Ps. 73:25.

prophet that all flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field: the grass withereth, and the flower thereof fadeth away; and God alone remaineth without change. To his existence there are no limits. When time shall have run his protracted course; when the brightest stars of heaven shall have sunk beneath the horizon of eternity; and the youngest heirs of immortality have grown grey with age, the christian's portion will exist, to cheer, and bless, and make him happy. In the enjoyment of this good, ages may roll away, worlds may be blotted from existence, new creations take place, and the farthest point of duration to which human thought has yet extended, arrive, and pass away, and the true believer will have reached only the first stages of his progressive and interminable happiness. Let, then, the aspirations of our hearts be, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee."

CONCLUSION.

To the duties exhibited in the preceding pages but few, who believe in the divine inspiration of the scriptures, are much inclined to object; but unfortunately the greater portion of them are disposed to postpone their performance to a future period. When pressed to enter upon the path of duty, their language, practically, is, "Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season I will call for thee." But this conduct is infinitely *absurd* and *dangerous*.

It is *absurd*, because it supposes that our secular concerns have a prior claim to our attention—that some future period will be more convenient to perform our duty than the present—that we have a right to postpone the commencement of the divine service to any period we please—and that there is more happiness to be derived from the world than there is from God.

What can be more absurd than a belief that our secular

concerns have a prior claim to our attention? God not only is the *first*, but the *best* of beings. Before the foundations of the earth were laid, or the morning stars sang together for joy, he was transcendent and incomparable excellence. Whatsoever things are glorious; whatsoever things are lovely; and whatsoever things are of good report, infinitely centre in him;—and from these perfections, as well as from other considerations, result an unalienable claim to our first and best attention.

Nor is his language less imperative than his rights. “Seek ye *first* the kingdom of God and his righteousness,” saith he, “and all these things shall be added.” The current of inspiration shews that he is a jealous God; that he will not give his glory to another; that as he is supreme in excellence, he will be supreme in honour. Hence we are commanded to honour the Lord with our substance, and with the *first* fruits of all our increase.

Nor is the service of the divine Being entitled to our first attention, simply, on account of his intrinsic excellence and demands, but also on account of its own importance. In the termination of our present existence, we shall enter upon a state of being that will never end. Long after we shall have quitted this stage of action, and our temporal concerns are numbered forever among the things that were, we shall be the subjects of ineffable happiness or misery. When the sun shall have burned out his splendours, and the luminaries of heaven sent forth their last twinkling ray, we shall still be approximating the source of unutterable delight, or plunging deeper and yet deeper into the abyss of hell. “These,” referring to the wicked, said Jesus Christ, “shall go away into *everlasting* punishment, but the righteous into life *eternal*.” To give, then, our first attention to our temporal concerns is an absurdity nothing short of madness. It is to let go the substance to catch the shadow; to grasp a bubble and lose a kingdom; to secure a momentary gratification at

the expense of everlasting happiness. Much as we are now delighted with the vanity of earthly things, we shall not fail to discover, in the hour of our dissolution, when the light of the eternal world enables us to estimate them as we ought, that, in comparison with true religion, they are nothing, and less than nothing.

The supposition that the divine service will be more convenient at a future period than it now is, if possible, is still more absurd than the one we have just noticed. In what, we ask, does this service consist? Is it not in doing, under existing circumstances, what we ought to do? And can there, in the nature of things, be a period in which we can do this more conveniently than at present?

We are all sensible, in the knowledge of our own hearts, that vicious habits are naturally progressive; and that, consequently, the sooner we begin their extermination the better we shall succeed. Every day we postpone the commencement of this duty, the more unlikely they will be to yield. Growing with our growth, and strengthening with our strength, they will ultimately defy our greatest efforts. Like every thing progressive, they acquire firmness in proportion to their age. The tender oak, just bursting the surface of the earth, and disclosing its foliage to the sun, is easily demolished; but in the progress of time it acquires strength, rises above the trees of the forest, and bids defiance to the storm. So it is with the corruption of human nature. Paralyzing the moral powers of the soul, it diminishes its sensibility to virtue, and reconciles it to its slavery and its chains. This we know to be true from our own experience. We perceive periods, in looking back upon our own history, in which our propensities to vice were comparatively feeble, but in being long cherished they acquired strength, and became, at length, nearly ungovernable. Like a resistless torrent, they have borne us down the course of dissipation, to the injury of our health, the diminution of our property, and

the imminent hazard of our souls. Could we call from their sepulchres those unhappy beings who have fallen victims to their own sins, and demand of them their sentiments upon the subject, they would say—"Sin once had but little influence on us, but in consequence of yielding to it, it obtained over us a paramount control; and hurrying us from one excess of riot to another, our property was wasted, our health impaired, and premature death terminated our earthly career."

And if the supposition that a future period will be more convenient to serve God than the present is absurd, the pretension to a right to postpone the commencement of his service is no less so. We always have been, and forever shall be, the absolute property of God. He created, redeemed, and now preserves us, and therefore is entitled to our service; not only at some future period, but through the whole course of our lives. "Ye are not your own," saith an apostle; "ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God with your spirit and your soul, which are his." He is as much entitled to our service *now*, as he *will*, or *can* be, at any other time. Nor is he only entitled to it, he claims it. How, then, can we say, "We will first serve ourselves, and then we will serve God; will first acquire wealth, and obtain fame, and then we will do our duty!" Will God suspend his claims to our obedience until we have become rich? till we have glittered in the path of honour, and drank to satiety at the fountains of worldly pleasure? No, he will not; and it is presumptuous in the extreme to believe he will. We must have lost every particle of just sensibility, if we make our own gratification the paramount object of pursuit—if we put off to a future period that which God commands us to do now. In adopting this course, we impiously dictate to God the terms on which we will be saved: we in effect tell him that after we have satiated our appetites with sin we will condescend to enter upon his service.

This, in point of absurdity, is equalled only by the belief

that there is more happiness derived from the commission of sin than there is from the performance of our duty. But where, we would ask, is the pleasure that sin affords? Is it in the anguish of a guilty conscience? In the apprehensions of future and eternal punishment? Or is it in the conflict of angry and degrading passions? In the disastrous and disgraceful issues to which they lead? Or in the judicial and overwhelming chastisements of a divine and retributive providence? We appeal confidently to every individual, if the way of the transgressor is not hard? If it is not a way cruel as the grave, going down to the chambers of death?

Ask the aspirant for human fame if the gratification of his inordinate wishes contribute to his comfort, and he will answer, no! The paths which lead to earthly glory are always planted with the sharpest thorns, and not unfrequently beset with the greatest perils. The anxiety which arises from the uncertainty of success; the mortification which inevitably results from defeat; the selfish and malignant passions which are nourished into strong existence by competition; the ungrateful returns which we not unfrequently experience from those we have benefitted; and the uncertain tenure by which public favour is retained, are always sources of vexation.

Nor is the pursuit of wealth less productive of disappointment. The covetous not unfrequently rise early and late take rest; oppress and defraud their fellow creatures; and unceasingly struggle for the accumulation of gain; but the result of all, on their part, is weariness, and fatigue, and disappointment; and on the part of their successors, extravagance, dissipation, and indolence.

The pursuit of pleasure inevitably ends in disappointment. Go ask the voluptuary on his dying bed what has been the result of his career, and he will answer, "The ruin of my constitution—the blighting of my early hopes—the beggary of my innocent children—the disgrace and alienation of my friends—and the premature termination of my life."

These, according to the laws of nature, are the effects of crime. "There is no peace to the wicked," saith God; "they are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt."

But is it asked, "What is the happiness which results from the performance of our duty?" The answer is, "A pleasing consciousness of peace—a sense of the divine favour—consolations of the holy spirit—sweet and delightful sympathy between heirs of the same grace—and hopes of everlasting happiness beyond the grave."

But the postponement of our duty is not only absurd, but infinitely dangerous.

It is conceded on all hands, that without holiness of heart no man can see the Lord. Repentance or perdition is the uniform language of the holy scriptures." "Except," saith Jesus Christ, "ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." But a change of heart can be obtained only in the present life. All beyond the limits of mortality is never-ending happiness or woe. As the tree falls so it lies, whether toward the north or to the south.

If, then, holiness of heart is an essential preparation to see God, and there is no time but the present in which this preparation can be obtained, procrastination in the pursuit of it must be infinitely hazardous. Should death arrest us before our peace is made with heaven, we must inevitably perish. The irrevocable sentence then will be, "He that is unholy let him be unholy still."

Our eternal happiness depending upon the attainment of the divine favour in the present life, renders a delay in the pursuit of that blessing infinitely dangerous. Who can calculate with certainty on living a day, an hour, or a single moment? Our life is in the hand of God, and he can take it when he chooses. To us nothing can be more uncertain than the continuance of our earthly being. Standing as we

do upon the verge of life, it is impossible to know when the period of our dissolution will arrive. No created power can arrest the progress of time, and with his advance approaches the termination of life. Every human being, without exception, is destined to become the tenant of the tomb. Where, alas! are the Alexanders, the Cæsars, the Tullies, and the Charlemagnes? Those mighty men, whose fame survives the ravages of time, and whose influence once shook kingdoms, and controlled the destiny of nations? They have long since descended to the silent grave. And shall we escape? No: it is impossible. It is ordained, in the system of divine providence, that we shall die; but of the time of our dissolution we are all ignorant. Although the living know they shall die, of the day and hour of his dissolution knoweth no man. Death lurks in secret, surrounded with impenetrable darkness, and often springs upon his victim when he is least expected. He alike mingles with the angry tempest and the gentle breeze; floats upon the foaming current and the placid lake; rises from the pestiferous marsh, and adheres to every particle of active and latent heat. In every element he finds a residence, and in every circumstance a means to facilitate the accomplishment of his purpose. Little as the fact now impresses us, we stand upon that awful isthmus, which projecting into eternity, is every moment exposed to the wave of death. Before we shall have finished the present sentence death may seize us as his victim, and terminate forever our earthly course. Storms are gathering over our unsheltered heads, and waiting only the arrival of death to burst upon us in overwhelming terrors. "The Lord Jesus, ere long, will be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power."

The first part of the manuscript discusses the general principles of the law of nature, and the rights of mankind. It is divided into several chapters, each containing a number of sections. The first chapter is on the rights of man, and the second on the rights of the citizen. The third chapter is on the rights of the subject, and the fourth on the rights of the foreigner. The fifth chapter is on the rights of the alien, and the sixth on the rights of the naturalized citizen. The seventh chapter is on the rights of the native-born citizen, and the eighth on the rights of the foreign-born citizen. The ninth chapter is on the rights of the naturalized subject, and the tenth on the rights of the naturalized foreigner. The eleventh chapter is on the rights of the naturalized alien, and the twelfth on the rights of the naturalized citizen. The thirteenth chapter is on the rights of the naturalized subject, and the fourteenth on the rights of the naturalized foreigner. 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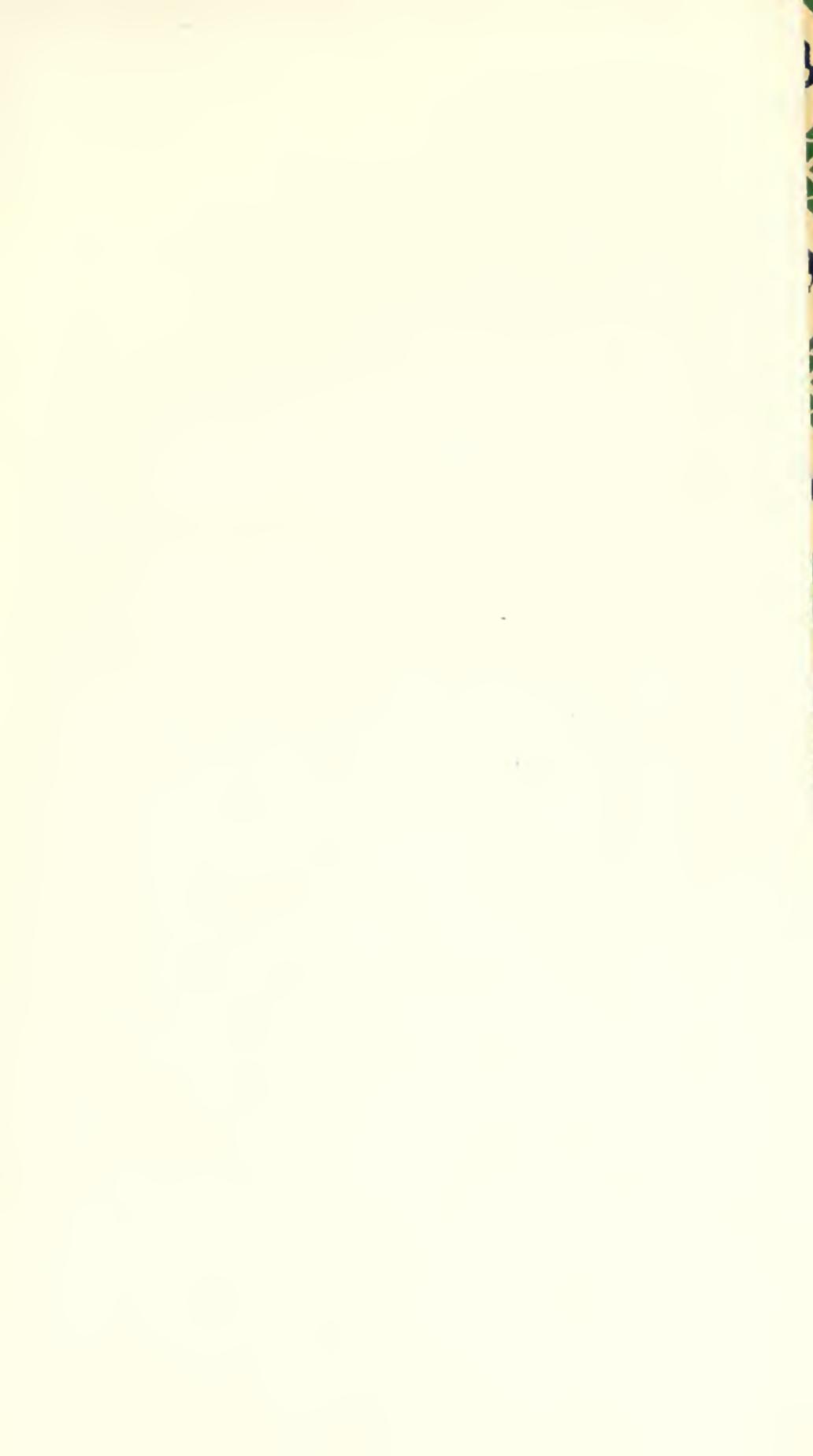
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ERRATA.

- Page 33, 23d line from top, substitute a *semicolon* for a *period* after the word *enthusiasm*.
- „ 45, 20th line from top, read *tens* for *ten*.
- „ 70, 4th line from top, read *imposture* for *importance*.
- „ 165, 10th line from top, read *indicate* for *vindicate*.
- „ 206, 5th line from top, read *Martyn* for *Martin*.







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