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THE
VIRGINIA
EVANGELICAL AND LITERARY
MAGAZINE.

VOL. II.

SEPTEMBER, 1819.

No. IX.

The Address of the Board of Education, established by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, to the Presbyteries, Ministers, Churches and People under the care of the Assembly.

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN,

IT is on no ordinary subject, or ordinary occasion, that we find it our duty now to address you. The subject is, *the ministry of the gospel*, one of the most important institutions of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; the occasion, the promulgation of *a plan devised by the Supreme Judicature of our Church* to provide, so far as their agency is concerned, for the preservation, extension and efficiency of this institution. On such a subject and occasion, it seems to us that we might *claim* your attention; “yet, for love’s sake, we rather beseech you” to regard our statement and suggestions; to regard them with great seriousness and care, as what, in the discharge of a sacred trust, we are bound to lay before you.

We shall *First* present you with a concise and general view of what has heretofore been thought and done, in regard to this subject, by the church to which we belong, terminating with that act of the General Assembly which gives rise to this address:

Secondly, Set before you the importance of the measures and efforts contemplated:

Thirdly, Show the special urgency which now exists, for entering with zeal and vigour on the execution of the plan proposed.

It is impossible to possess just and enlightened views of the gospel dispensation,—to understand the nature and value of its blessings, and the importance of extending, and preserving them among mankind,—and not perceive that the gospel ministry, by the appointment of the Great Head of the church, and in the very nature of things, is an essential and prominent part of the whole system.

We might, therefore, reasonably expect that the fathers of our church in this country, who were eminently men of enlightened and zealous piety, would be particularly concerned and careful to provide for the training up of able and faithful preachers and pastors, both for the supply of the churches already established, and for extending the blessings of the gospel through the destitute regions around them. And such we accordingly find was the fact. They did much, they did more—in proportion to their means—much more, for the compassing of these objects, than those of the present generation have done, or are now doing. The institutions of learning which they established and patronized, required and received from them exertions and sacrifices far greater than we are making; and the chief design in all those institutions, and the most powerful motive that operated in their support, was, to provide, as extensively as possible, a learned and pious ministry.

But although in our church, there has been a real decline in zeal and exertion, in educating men for the gospel ministry, yet we remark with pleasure, that the object has never been out of view; nor has it ever been regarded as of small moment, by the members, ministers and judicatures of the Presbyterian Church. So different from this is the fact, that the plan which is now submitted, may be considered as having grown gradually out of the measures adopted by the General Assembly of our church, about fourteen years ago; and as being, really, little else than the carrying of those measures into full effect. We do not mean that an education society, *in the form now proposed*, was then contemplated. This is a measure which has been suggested by circumstances. But *the substance of the enterprise*, is matter of record in the minutes of the Assembly, at all their meetings, since the year 1805. In that year an overture was submitted to the Assembly, in which it was proposed, “to recommend it to the Presbyteries—perhaps to enjoin it on them—to look out, among themselves, pious youth of promising talents, and endeavour to educate and bring them forward into the ministry.” On this the Assembly “Resolved, That, as the above overture embraces objects of high importance to the interests of religion;

and this General Assembly do not find themselves in a situation to take the necessary measures respecting them, they lie over for consideration until the meeting of the next General Assembly;—to which we would earnestly recommend, that the subjects be duly considered, and acted upon: And that the Presbyteries instruct their commissioners respecting the measures which they may think advisable to be adopted.”

The result of this act of the Assembly is thus stated, on the minutes of the following year; and we beg you to give it a very attentive and and serious consideration.

“The commissioners from all the Presbyteries represented in this Assembly, having been called to state the opinion entertained by their respective Presbyteries, on this subject, it appeared, that the overture had been seriously considered and highly approved, by the most of them; that some Presbyteries had long been in the habit of using the measures contemplated in the overture, for bringing forward youth of piety and talents, as candidates for the gospel ministry; and that others had adopted and organized such measures within the last year, and in consequence of the overture under consideration.

“After maturely deliberating, the Assembly determined that *the part of the overture which relates to the selection and education of young men of piety and talents for the gospel ministry*, presents a plan which they consider as well deserving their countenance and support. It is indeed, an obvious and melancholy fact, that the candidates for the gospel ministry within the bounds of the Presbyterian church, at present, are greatly disproportionate to the demand which is made for their services; and that the rapid increase of vacant congregations, taken in connexion with the youth who are studying for the ministry, presents a most gloomy prospect of what is likely to be the state of our church in a few years, if prompt and effectual measures be not taken to furnish a supply of ministers, much greater than the existing state of things is likely to produce. The Assembly were indeed deeply affected by the view which they had taken of this subject, and were extremely solicitous to adopt the most efficient measures which circumstances permit to remedy the evil which exists, and to prevent its augmentation. But as the Presbyteries of which the General Assembly have oversight, are scattered over a wide extent of country and their circumstances are known to be extremely various, it occurred that *an absolute injunction* on all the Presbyteries, immediately to enter on the execution of the plan proposed, might bear hard on some, if not be entirely incapable of execution. On the other hand *merely to*

recommend an attention to the plan, without attaching any responsibility to the neglect of the recommendation, appeared to the Assembly incompatible with the high importance of the subject, and with their own duty as guardians of the church, bound especially to provide for their people a supply of the word of life. It was therefore determined to take a *middle course* between these extremes, so as, if possible to avoid the inconvenience of both. With this in view, it was resolved to recommend, *and the Assembly do hereby most earnestly recommend*, to every Presbytery under their care, to use their utmost endeavours to increase, by all suitable means in their power, the number of promising candidates for the holy ministry;—to press it upon the parents of pious youth to educate them for the church, and on the youth themselves, to devote their talents and their lives to this sacred calling;—to make vigorous exertions to raise funds to assist all the youth who need assistance;—to be careful that the youth whom they take on their funds, give such evidence as the nature of the case admits, that they possess both *talents and piety*;—to inspect the education of those youth during the course both of their academical and theological studies; choosing for them such schools, seminaries, and teachers as each Presbytery may judge most advantageous, so as eventually to bring them into the ministry, well furnished for their work: and the Assembly do hereby order, that every Presbytery under their care make annually a report to the Assembly, stating particularly what they have done in this concern, or why (if the case so shall be) they have done nothing in it: and the Assembly will, when these reports are received, consider each distinctly, and decide by vote, whether the Presbyteries, severally, shall be considered as having discharged or neglected their duty, in this important business.”

Agreeably to the engagement stated at the close of this minute, the Assembly have, at each of their subsequent meetings, made the inquiry specified: And although the result of the inquiry has been to acquit the Presbyteries, with a few exceptions, of the charge of entire neglect; yet, almost annually, the Assembly, in very impressive language, recognize the want of ministers, state anew the duty of providing them, and lament that so little is effected in this great and interesting concern.

In the year 1817 the Assembly “Resolved, That it be recommended to those Presbyteries who have funds for the education of poor and pious youth for the gospel ministry, or who are able to raise funds for this purpose, but can find no suitable young men within their own bounds, to take measures

to obtain them from the bounds of other Presbyteries, and educate them for the work of the ministry; or that they annually transmit money, for this object, to the General Assembly, that the Assembly may appropriate it to the object for which it was raised; or that they transmit it to one of the Theological Seminaries within our bounds, to be applied, by the Professors, to the education of indigent young men in said seminaries: And that the stated clerk of the General Assembly be the organ of communication between such Presbyteries as may have money to be applied to the above purpose, and those Presbyteries who may have under their care young men who need their liberality."

By this resolution it will be observed that the Assembly attempted virtually, much the same thing with what they are now attempting by the instrumentality of a Board of Education, though they still had not definitely in view the appointment of such a Board.

Time and the wants to which it gives birth, always mature and extend the views of those who meditate and organize public enterprises. Thus the Assembly, retaining the views which they had long possessed, but instructed by events which had taken place, especially within two years immediately preceding their last meeting, and after a very full and careful discussion of the subject, became satisfied that they might probably promote their favourite design far more effectually, and ensure success to a far greater extent, by the establishment of a BOARD OF EDUCATION, than by all the means which they had before devised. Gradually advancing in their course and extending their views, as they have done in relation to the *missionary business*, they have adopted a measure, the record of which is as follows:

[See Virginia Evangelical and Literary Magazine, No. VII. Vol. II. pa. 386.]

We have given the preceeding detail that you may have a general view of what has hitherto been done, in regard to the selection and education of young men for the gospel ministry, in that body which is intended to concentrate the wisdom and piety of our church;—that you may see how long and how seriously they who composed that body have contemplated this subject, and of course that you are not called on to favour a project of dubious tendency; and especially that the arguments and considerations with which the Assembly have enforced the subject, may have that powerful influence on your minds which, as we apprehend, a careful attention to them cannot fail to produce. Still we do not deem it superfluous,

II. To make a few additional remarks on the importance of the object, for the attainment of which the measures and efforts in contemplation have been recommended.

We beg you to consider, brethren, that *the preaching of the gospel* is the great instrumental cause ordained by God, for the propagation of the gospel in the world. Attend to the sacred oracle—"How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how 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? as it is written, how beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace and bring glad tidings of good things.—So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Rom. x. 14, 15, 17.

Much has lately been done, and is still doing, for putting the Bible into the hands of all who are able to read it; and for teaching those to read it, to whom it has heretofore, on account of their ignorance, been a sealed book. This is as it should be. Too much has not been done: nay, much remains to be done; and we should deprecate the idea of saying or doing any thing to lessen the exertions, or the zeal, manifested in dispersing far and wide the volume of inspiration. But we do verily believe that, as the human mind is apt to be ingrossed by a favourite object, to the exclusion or neglect of other objects as important as that which it regards, so it has happened here. A zeal to disperse *the written word* has, with many, prevented a due concern and proper exertions to provide for *the preached word*. This is not as it ought to be. "These things ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone." Let us never forget that the preaching of the word is the ordinary means instituted by God for giving efficacy to the truths of revelation. Those truths are repositied in the Bible. But in order to their practical and saving application, (always under the influence of that Holy Spirit, whose operations alone can render them effectual to salvation,) they must be drawn out of the Bible by the preacher of the gospel, and explained, inculcated and enforced, by oral addresses.

That this is the ordinary way in which revealed truth becomes the power of God unto salvation, is manifest from all experience, as well as from the scriptures themselves. Instances there no doubt are, of individuals who have been converted unto God by merely reading the Bible; and it will ever be the delightful fountain from which the people of God will constantly and immediately draw the waters of life, and the unerring test by which they will try every doctrine. But if an

instance should occur, once in a century, of a religious awakening begun by reading the scriptures and other good books, we doubt if a single instance can be pointed out in which the good work has *proceeded far*, without the preaching of the word. Indeed with very few exceptions it is the preached word that both begins and carries on this work, *among the mass of the community*.

To the inquiry why the fact should be so, it would be a sufficient answer to say, that *such is God's appointment*.—"Faith cometh by hearing." But we can, in this instance, see an analogy between the effectual communication of revealed truth, and that of truth of every other kind. Without oral instruction there would be little knowledge in the world, though the world were filled with books. In every gradation of instruction, from the child that learns his alphabet to the erudite adept in science, the advances are made chiefly by oral instruction. Who ever thought of opening a school, or a college, by placing a library in it, from which each scholar might be furnished with suitable books, but without any teachers to explain them by verbal instruction, to aid the pupils in their researches, or to direct those researches aright? It is the same in religion; or rather the case is stronger here, because depraved man is more averse from religious truth than from truth of any other kind. We cheerfully admit,—nay, we would earnestly contend, that every human being arrived at the age of discretion should have a Bible, and be taught to read it: But we also contend that mankind must have living teachers too, or that the Bible, in ninety-nine instances out of a hundred, will be little read, little understood, and do but little good.

From the time of the Evangelist Philip, down to the present hour, the answer even of a diligent reader to the inquiry "Understandest thou what thou readest?" must be that of the Ethiopian Eunuch, "How can, I, except some man should guide me."

We see, then, that, in the case before us, the appointment of God is perfectly agreeable to the natural course of things; which, indeed, in every case, is nothing else than his appointment.

Brethren, we are much concerned to make the truth here contemplated prominent and pointed. We believe we have reasoned upon it sufficiently, and we do not wish unduly to extend our address. Allow us, then, to say, that you ought to keep it constantly in your recollection, that, use whatever other means you may, you will not make true religion prevail in any one place, in which there is not, or has not been,

a preacher of the gospel. You will not usually extend religion one step further than you send a preacher of the gospel. And all those places, and all those regions, in which there are not preachers of the gospel, will and must be without religion;—without it, in most cases, absolutely and entirely, and in all cases, with the exception only of a very few individuals. Is not this a most affecting thought! But it will be rendered more affecting by considering,

III. The *special urgency* which now exists for entering with zeal and vigour on the execution of the plan proposed.

This plan has been formed with a view to increase, as rapidly as possible, the number of well qualified ministers of the gospel; and the urgency which exists arises from the pressing want of gospel ministers beyond the possibility of a present supply, or the rational hope that it can be furnished in any short period; and especially from the dismaying prospect, that the future threatens to be worse than the past, or the present.

Brethren, it is our earnest desire and endeavour in this address to keep strictly to the simplicity of truth; avoiding, not only all evident exaggeration, but, as far as we easily can, a rhetorical or figurative exhibition of the truth itself. But verily, in regard to the point now before us, we believe that, unless we should wilfully prevaricate, we could scarcely represent the want of gospel ministers as greater than it really is. We have no fear at all of making you believe that this want is greater, or more urgent, than a full knowledge of the truth would demonstrate it to be; or that the prospect before us, otherwise than as it is brightened by the hope that God will provide for his church, is less gloomy than our representation will make it. No—but on the contrary, after all that we shall say, we greatly fear that you will not understand how bad the case, or how gloomy the prospect, actually is.

We are under the necessity of making a short statement: and if correctly made and properly attended to, its brevity will not prevent, but aid the impression which it ought to make. Know then, dearly beloved brethren, that we have at present, within the bounds of our church, more than four hundred vacant congregations, and that such congregations, in consequence of the rapid settlements on our frontiers, to say nothing of the vacancies made by the deaths of ministers, is fast increasing every year. There are, beside, large missionary regions, crying to us in the most moving language to relieve them from a famine of the word of life. Now, for the supply of existing vacancies and missionary demands from our

brethren on the frontiers, we want, at the present hour, beyond the number which we have, or know how to obtain, at least six hundred well qualified ministers of the gospel. Many more might be profitably employed within our bounds; but these are necessary to relieve pressing wants. We are also to recollect that the heathens on our borders and in foreign lands are to receive the gospel; and that the signs of the times seem to indicate that they are soon to receive it. And do we not owe it to God and his church, to contribute our proportion of effort and expense towards evangelizing the world; and should we not cherish a holy emulation to take to ourselves as much as we may of this blessed debt,—a debt to be repaid with an eternal interest?—For this object then we want four hundred additional missionaries.

Of course our church now wants, in all, at least a thousand gospel ministers beyond the number which she can possibly command. Nor will this enormous want grow less, but greater every year. Every year some vacancies are made by the deaths of ministers; and it is calculated that our population doubles in twenty years. So that, if all other circumstances should remain as they are, this single cause would, in twenty years time, double the present want and demand. But other circumstances will not remain as they are. They will be constantly changing, and in such a manner as greatly to increase the deplorable disparity between the work to be done in the gospel vineyard and the hands that will be found to do it. The American Society for educating pious youth for the gospel ministry, have, in their last report, made it apparent, on principles of fair and even moderate calculation, that, if ministers of the gospel shall be annually furnished for a century to come only in the ratio of the present supply, there will, at the end of the century, be in this country a population greater than the present population of Europe, entirely destitute of competent religious teachers. Look at all this, dear brethren; and keep in mind that it is not fiction, but sober, solemn reality that you are looking at; and keep in mind, too, the truth which has been proved, that the blessing of the gospel will not be experienced where the gospel is not preached; and then ask yourselves what is to be done!

We conclude our address by telling you what we think *ought* to be done. Let every christian make it daily the subject of his earnest prayer, and all assemblies for social worship the subject of their united supplications, that God would graciously and effectually interpose to save his people from perishing for lack of spiritual knowledge: That he would pour out his Spirit and revive religion in our churches, so

that, among other blessings attending such revivals, a host of precious youth may become the subjects of the renewing grace of God, and thus be prepared to offer themselves to the Lord for his service in the ministry of the gospel. Pray that they may be disposed to make this offering, and that their parents and guardians may not hinder, but encourage them to do it. Pray, brethren, that we may feel as we ought to feel, and that we may act as we are called to act in this time of the church's necessity:—That we may feel humble in view of our past criminal neglect; that we may feel our dependence on God; and while we implore his help, may, as in such circumstances ought ever to be done, exert ourselves with the greatest activity and energy in performing the duty incumbent on us. Let us especially endeavour heartily and zealously and unitedly to carry into full effect the plan which is herewith laid before you. Let the execution of this plan be viewed, as it may justly claim to be viewed, *a matter of fundamental importance to the cause of Christ*:—Not as on a footing with a hundred other good and benevolent plans, which are claiming, and rightfully demanding a portion of attention; but as demanding a preference to them all; as, in a word, of more immediate and pressing importance, than any one effort beside, for the propagation of the gospel.

Viewing it thus, let every Presbytery form a Board of Education, auxiliary to this Board; let other auxiliary societies in prosecution of the same great object be formed, wherever it may be practicable; and let every individual Christian resolve to do all in his power to give effect to this plan. Let the poor contribute their mites, and the rich a proper part of their abundance. Let our pious and benevolent women, both young and old, who have acted so nobly in other instances, give us their important aid;—and let even children and babes contribute to it. Let us thus make one great and united effort, with humble faith and hope in God that his blessing may attend us:—and notwithstanding every discouragement and all opposition, we shall be successful.

From a plan so liberal in its principles as this, it is hoped that no minister of the gospel, no professing christian, no individual belonging to our denomination, will withhold his support; but that all, of both sexes and of every age, will feel an earnest desire of contributing something to the attainment of an object so immensely important as this address contemplates. God will indeed preserve his own church, and accomplish his own glorious purposes in relation to his chosen people; but let it never be forgotten, that the dispensation of his grace is conducted on principles that require the use of

established means, and invite and claim our co-operation in the great work of saving immortal souls and of extending the limits of the Saviour's kingdom. In an honour so pre-eminent as that of being co-workers with God, all should feel a holy ambition of participating. Let none dare to sin against God and their own souls, by treating this proffered honour with contempt or neglect; but let every one engage in this great work, as his privilege and his duty; anticipating that day when the Judge of quick and dead, who will notice visits paid to his sick and food given to his hungry saints, shall distinguish with peculiar approbation that christian benevolence, which is employed in furnishing supplies to immortal beings who are perishing with want of the bread and water of life.

ROBERT RALSTON, PRESIDENT.

JULY, 1819.

CONSTITUTION OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION.

Article 1. There shall be a general BOARD OF EDUCATION, known by the name of "*The Board of Education, under the care of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America.*"

Art. 2. The Board shall consist of thirty-six members; of whom there shall be twenty ministers and sixteen elders; one minister and one elder to be chosen from each Synod, and the remainder from Philadelphia and from a distance convenient to it. Seven members including the President, or Vice-President, shall be a quorum to transact business.

Art. 3. The whole number of members shall be divided into four classes; one fourth to be annually elected.

Art. 4. The election of the members of the Board shall be made by nomination and ballot by the General Assembly.

Art. 5. The officers shall be a President, three Vice-Presidents, a recording and a corresponding Secretary, and a Treasurer, to be annually elected by the Board.

Art. 6. The objects of this Board shall be,

- 1st. To recognize such Presbyteries, and other associations, as may form themselves into education societies, as auxiliary to the General Board.
- 2d. To assist such Presbyteries and Associations in educating pious youth for the gospel ministry, both in their academical and theological course.

3d. To assign, according to their best discretion, to the several auxiliary societies, a just proportion of the whole disposable funds under their controul.

4th. To concert and execute such measures, as they shall judge to be proper, for increasing their funds, and promoting the general object.

Art. 7. No young man shall be patronised or assisted by any auxiliary society, unless he shall produce a testimonial of his hopeful piety and talents, from some Presbytery, under whose care he shall be taken.

Art. 8. Auxiliary societies may make such arrangements, and selection of a seminary for the young men under their patronage, as in their opinion shall be most eligible for the prosecuting of their education, whether classical or theological.

Art. 9. The auxiliary societies shall send to the Board all the surplus funds in their hands, which shall not be necessary for the accommodation of those immediately depending on them for support.

Art. 10. Every auxiliary society shall annually forward a report of their proceedings to the Board, sufficiently early to enable the Board, whose duty it shall be, to report to the General Assembly.

Art. 11. The Board shall have power to make such by-laws, to regulate their own proceedings, and effectually to accomplish the great objects of their appointment, as shall not be inconsistent with this constitution.

Art. 12. The Board may propose to the General Assembly, from time to time, such plans as they may consider useful and necessary, for the success of this institution, to be recommended to the several societies or churches as the Assembly may think proper.

Art. 13. No addition or amendment to the provisions of this constitution shall be made, unless by the consent of two thirds of the members of the General Assembly, present at any of their sessions, of which notice shall be given at least one day previous.

****** Agents will soon be sent out by the Board, for the purposes of promoting the establishment of auxiliary institutions, and collecting funds to facilitate the object of the General Assembly.

FORM OF A CONSTITUTION,

Recommended to the adoption of Societies Auxiliary to "The Board of Education under the care of the General

Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of the United States of America."

Article 1. This Society shall be called the Education Society of ———, Auxiliary to "the Board of Education under the care of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of the United States of America."

Article 2. The object shall be to aid in the education of poor and pious youth, of the Presbyterian denomination, for the gospel ministry.

Article 3. A Contribution of ——— per annum, or ——— of a life subscription, shall constitute any person a member of this Society.

Article 4. The surplus funds shall be paid to "the Board of Education" to which this Society is Auxiliary.

Article 5. The business of this Society shall be conducted by ——— Managers; who shall meet within three days after the Annual Meeting, to be convened by notice from the acting Secretary of the Society, and chose from amongst their members, a President, a Vice-President, a Secretary and Treasurer. They shall make bye-laws for their own government, and report their proceedings to the Society at each annual meeting.

Article 6. The meetings of the Society shall be held at such place as may be agreed upon, on the ——— of ——— in each year, and at such other times as the Board of Managers may direct; ——— members shall be a quorum for the transaction of all business.

Article 7. A report from this Society shall be made annually to the Board of Education, at least as early as the 20th April, so as to be embraced in the report of that Body, to be made to the General Assembly at their meeting in May.

Article 8. Alterations may be made in this Constitution by a vote of three fourths of the members present, at any annual meetings of the Society.

☞ It is recommended to the Auxiliary Societies to endeavour to have established in their vicinity Associations auxiliary to themselves.

For the Virginia Evangelical and Literary Magazine.

SHORT DISCOURSES FOR FAMILIES, No. VIII.

It is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing.—Gal. iv. 18.

OPEN the early history of our religion; especially that inestimable narrative of its first propagation, *the Acts of the*

Apostles. You soon perceive a mighty something at work in those primitive Christians which astonishes you, and to which we rarely see any thing like a parallel amongst ourselves. What was that glorious principle which urged them forward with an ardour which nothing could extinguish, an activity which no labours could tire, a courage which no dangers could appal, in the pursuit of holiness, and the conquest of a world for our Lord Jesus Christ? I answer, it was precisely that steady zeal in a good cause which is recommended in my text. To illustrate its nature and importance is the purpose of the present discourse.

I. The general idea of zeal is plain and obvious. To be zealously affected towards any desirable object is to be much in earnest about it, to be animated with a lively eagerness for its attainment. We should ever graduate our zeal according to the value of the object in view. And when success depends upon a series of exertions, it is manifestly requisite that we strive to maintain an unwavering, a growing solicitude through every step of our progress.

In order to gain more distinct and impressive views of the nature of zeal in a good cause, we may be much assisted by observing its operation in some interesting cases. And though the maxim of the text appears to every laudable pursuit in which we can be engaged, in temporal concerns as well as spiritual, I shall select my instances from those of the latter class only.

Here are two friends who have known each other long, and loved each other dearly. They have formed such habits of intimacy and mutual confidence, that their souls seem almost blended into one. Often have they found their sorrows alleviated, and their joys redoubled, by free communication and tender sympathy. Suppose one of these friends brought to experience the grace of God in the gospel; to mourn for sin, to abhor it and fly from it as the most deadly evil; to find a refuge from the wrath to come in the arms of him "who loved us and gave himself for us;" and to make the salvation of the soul henceforth the grand business of life: while the other remains as before, agreeable and amiable in many respects, but altogether destitute of religion; all his aims, and all his calculations of happiness, still chained down to this polluted and perishing world. We have now a new state of things before us. And how will our young convert be likely to act towards the friend to whom he has been so many years and so warmly attached? Doubtless with zeal to be instrumental in his deliverance from sin and ruin. For never did a human being taste the sweetness of communion with God, with-

out feeling a proportionate concern that others might taste it also; and especially those with whom he was most nearly connected, and to whom he had the readiest access. I see this disciple of Christ then, delighted with his recent discoveries and precious acquisitions, turning an anxious eye to the friend of his heart. I mark him guarding all that he says and does with every warrantable precaution, that he may not disgust the soul which he wishes to win to the Saviour; watching for the most favourable season of address, and studying the most acceptable and melting words of persuasion. Neglected, perhaps repulsed again and again, he does not give over the benevolent attempt. He knows that the "turning a sinner from the error of his ways" is a good thing of the first order; and in this good thing his heart is zealously affected. In earnest labours to accomplish his purpose, and in fervent prayers to God for success, he perseveres; and will continue to do so until he either gains his brother, or is compelled painfully to relinquish the case, as desperate. Should the *happy* alternative take place, what additional and powerful ties of endearment does religion form to unite these friends for ever. With what vigilance, with what an energy of zealous love, will they assist each other in escaping from the snares of sin and satan, and travelling to the regions of immortal glory! How faithfully will needful admonition be administered between them, and how thankfully received and applied! Yes, here is a friendship of the sublimest kind, a friendship emphatically worthy of the name.

Observe yonder truly Christian parent, in the midst of a numerous family of children growing up under his eye. To him they look for food, and raiment, and education, and all the necessary provisions for their comfort in the world; and most affectionately does he recognize their claims upon his industry and kindness. For their good he labours day after day with unabated alacrity, and meditates by night while they slumber. But their eternal welfare lies still nearer to his heart than any earthly prosperity which he can desire for them. With an interest too intense for words to express, he looks upon these infant immortals, bestowed of Heaven to crown his wedded love; committed, during the most critical period of their existence, to his care; and hastening away, even already, on the rapid wings of time to an eternal retribution. He knows that by and by it is to be a question of no moment whether they were rich or indigent, famous or obscure, exalted or lowly, in the present life. Their endless bliss or wretchedness is to be settled by a far different enquiry; namely, whether or not they "acquainted themselves with God,"

dreaded his anger, embraced his mercy, and filled up their allotted stations in a manner becoming the gospel. Under such impressions, how can a Christian parent be otherwise than zealously affected in the great work of training his beloved offspring for God and heaven? Accordingly he avails himself of the earliest dawning of their intellectual capacities; to pour upon their minds the dew of heavenly instruction. With words well chosen, and with patience not to be wearied; he leads them to know their Creator and Preserver; to see the purity of his law, by which they are justly condemned as sinners in his presence; to discover and admire the wonderful remedy provided for guilty man in the gospel. With sacred eloquence he allures and urges them, by the mercies of God in Christ Jesus, to give up their hearts early and entirely to him who alone has a right to their unlimited devotion. He makes his house a temple of piety, in which, as the priest of his family, he offers the sacrifice of humble adoration, prayer, and thanksgiving, with the rising and the setting sun. All his conversation, all his actions, exemplify that vital christianity which he inculcates upon his children; for he feels that in this way he is to labour in working out their salvation as well as his own. Deeply sensible that "evil communication corrupts good manners," he watches with the utmost concern to keep them from intimacy with the ungodly and the profligate, however wealthy, polished, and fashionable they may be; and to form associations for them with "the excellent of the earth," the consistent followers of a meek and lowly Saviour. Nor does he shun the exercise of wholesome restraint, nor even the use of the rod of correction, when he sees that they are necessary. This is undoubtedly the most trying and painful part of parental duty. It will only be steadily performed by those who are so zealous to "train up their children in the way they should go," to "bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord," that their love for their children exceeds their fondness, and that they deem it a less evil to make them weep now than to expose them to weeping and gnashing of teeth forever. I fancy myself overhearing the address of such a parent to the sweet image of himself who sits on his knee and clings around his neck. "Believe and remember it, my child, that there is nothing solid or permanent for us to rely upon but the favour of our Father in heaven. At no distant day I must leave you, and go the way of all flesh. After a few more years at farthest, you are to see your father and mother no more in this world. And in your turn you are to follow us to the grave and to the bar of God. O my child, dearer to me than the air I breathe, how

shall it be with mutual shoutings of joy and congratulation, or are you to look up to a lost heaven, and then sink to hell in all the horrors of despair? Yield,—it is your father who intreats you—yield to the instructions of the gospel, and the blessed influences of the Spirit of God who strives with you in your heart. Go to the throne of divine mercy, and implore of God, for the sake of his only Son our Redeemer, to forgive your sins, to renew your nature, and to give you a place among his children. In this way alone will you find peace and safety for your soul, both in this life and that which is to come? Would to God that all parents, or even all who profess christianity, were such as I have described! Alas, the case with many is far different. They are eager enough to give their children wordly accomplishments and fortunes, to prepare them for making a figure on this little temporary scene of things, but as to the supreme duty of leading them, like Joshua, to serve the God of heaven, and to prefer his friendship to all the splendours and pleasures of this world, they are, to say the least, deplorably wanting in zeal and exertion. This fact alone is quite sufficient to account for the languid state of religion in our churches and throughout our country. If sincere godliness be neglected at the domestic fire side, it is not likely to thrive any where else.

Next let us turn our eyes to the teacher of children and youth. See him in his school, surrounded with his lovely and interesting groupe of scholars. To all these he stands, in a great measure, in the place of a parent. To him is delegated much of the authority, and on him devolve many of the duties of a father. Let us suppose him to be, what every teacher ought to be, a fervent christian, zealously affected in that good thing which is committed to his trust. How awful, and yet how delightful must his office appear in this view! While he is required to enlighten them with useful civil education, and to guard their morals from external contamination, the opportunity is put into his hands to sow in all these young minds the seeds of christian piety and virtue. I observe him beginning and closing his school, at the regulated hours, with prayer to God, commending his precious charge and his labours for their benefit, to the care and blessing of heaven. I mark him preserving his authority inviolate, yet governing his pupils more by the influence of love than of fear. I see him watching over his looks, words and actions for their sakes, that every thing which they witness in him may be a fresh lesson of that “fear of God which is the beginning of wisdom;” seizing every opening that occurs to recommend, from the fulness of his own heart, the doctrines and the

precepts of pure and undefiled religion. Impartially just to all, he wears on his countenance a smile of special encouragement towards those who are diligent and humble, who abhor iniquity and love to practice that which is good. In short it is his holy and steady ambition not only to make learned men and women, but also to make genuine christians of the little ones placed under his superintendence. Alas, there are but few such teachers amongst us! But blessed are those few. They are doing much good; and they shall not fail of obtaining that reward which God has promised to his faithful servants.

I shall use only one instance more to illustrate my subject; but that one is of the most exalted kind and of inexpressible importance. I mean zeal in the ministry of the gospel. No serious mind can survey the nature and designs of this office, even for a few moments, without adopting the Apostle's humble exclamation, "who is sufficient for these things?" Fully sufficient no mortal is, however gifted, and however devoted. Yet there is a vast difference, I do not say merely between the sincere preacher and the vile, hypocritical intruder into the pulpit; but between the ardent, zealous herald of salvation, and the lukewarm speaker, who delivers the truth with general wishes that it may do good, but in a dull, unanimated way, as if it were rather a task of disagreeable labour than a high and glorious work in which all the faculties and feelings of his soul ought to be absorbed. If zeal be a proper thing any where, it is proper, it is transcendently necessary here. In whose name are we appointed to speak? In the name of the Lord God Almighty, "the King eternal, immortal, and invisible," whose messengers we are. To whom do we address ourselves? To the many of our fellow men who are "in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity," rebelling with a daring boldness against the God of heaven, and "led captive by the devil at his will;" and to the few who are climbing the arduous path, obstructed with a thousand difficulties, and beset with hosts of malignant and indefatigable enemies, to their Father's house above. And what is the purport of our message? To denounce the wrath of God, all the terrors of his law, all the horrors of endless misery against every one who persists in hostility to God; to proclaim the Redeemer, the only and all-sufficient Redeemer of guilty man, and urge perishing sinners to fly to him without delay for refuge; to watch over, admonish, and assist the pilgrims of Zion, that they may pursue their journey heavenward in a spirit and manner worthy of their high vocation, and may in due time enter into

that perfect rest which remains for the people of God. And is it possible, in such an office as this, to be indolent, to be cold and unanimated, as if we were treating matters of small consequence; and to be more taken up with this trifling world than with the discharge and the success of our ministry? Ah, it is too possible; it is often exemplified as indubitable fact. But thanks be to God, I have known, and still know preachers of a very different character; men zealously affected in the good work which God has put into their hands; men whose aims soars above this world and its fleeting vanities, who "count not their lives dear to themselves, so that they may finish their course with joy, and the ministry which they have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God." Would to God that I could worthily delineate the heart and the conduct of one of these "servants of the most high God, who shew unto us the way of Salvation." He is one who has been awakened to tremble on the brink of perdition, has tasted "the wormwood and the gall" of sin, and is still carrying on a war for its utter extermination from his bosom. He has been "brought out of darkness into marvelous light," has "tasted that the Lord is gracious," has cast his soul upon the arms of a crucified Saviour, and still daily lives by faith in him, having "fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ." The word of God is the source of all his immortal hopes; he therefore makes it his constant study and his perpetual guide. Looking abroad with a compassionate, bleeding heart upon the multitudes who are madly crowding the road to destruction, he devotes his time, his talents, his strenuous exertions to the sacred work of their deliverance. He addresses them as the ambassador of Christ, with united authority and love; warning them of the dreadful perils with which their souls are environed; pointing out to their view "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world;" and intreating them with agonizing importunity not to "neglect so great salvation." Fervent and laborious in preaching, "both publicly and from house to house," as opportunities are afforded, he is equally earnest in supplication for the efficacious influences of the Holy Spirit, that the word of God may prove a "savour of life," and not a means of aggravated condemnation to his hearers. For he knows; and bears deeply in mind, that though "a Paul may plant, and an Apollos water, it is God alone that giveth the increase." Nor is his ministerial zeal confined to the pulpit. In all situations, in all companies, he seeks occasion and eagerly embraces it, to call sinners to repentance, and to recommend the grace of God to universal acceptance. His example

too shines with the beauty of holiness. He is the christian and the minister wherever he appears. In such employments as these, and not in grasping after titles and honours, not in amassing wealth, which is but for a moment, his well-spent years glide swiftly away; attended indeed with many trials of his faith and patience, but cheered also with the comforts of the gospel, which are neither few nor small, and with the enrapturing hope of the approbation of his Divine Master, when he shall come at the last day to take his servants to his immediate and blissful presence above. And when seals are given to his ministry, when sinners are converted to God, and saints dismissed in triumph to heaven, by his instrumentality; O how pure, how exquisite is his joy! Not the votaries of pleasure, nor the possessors of earthly riches and grandeur, nor the proud conquerors of nations, have any exultation to be compared with what he feels in rescuing a soul from the power of Satan, and adding one more soldier to the army of the King of Zion, one more inhabitant to the Jerusalem on high. On such events, he anticipates in some measure, even in this vale of tears, that transporting hour when he shall stand before the chief Shepherd, and say, Lord, by thine infinite grace, "here am I, and the children whom thou hast given me!" Happy, thrice happy the minister who can say with all his heart, and that continually, 'O my God, let this be my lot at last, above all the temporal blessings which are to be found in this world. Thou, searcher of all the springs of feeling and action within me, knowest that I covet this consummation of my service more than all the things which the world accounts great, good and desirable.'

II. Let us now proceed to consider the importance of being zealously affected in the cause of religion. My text declares that it is good to be so affected.

And here I observe, in the first place, that zeal in the path of duty is the best evidence of our being born again, and accepted with God as his children. The religion of the scriptures is a glowing fire in the breast, an ardent hunger and thirst for personal sanctification, and for the high privilege of glorifying God and doing good to our fellow men. "Whatever our hand finds to do," every thing calls loudly upon us to "do it with our might." All those obligations which are pressed upon us by the gospel of our redemption, all those interests which bear the stamp of eternity, proclaim with a voice of thunder that our utmost and incessant energy of action is still too little for the suitable fulfilment of our christian duties. How then can the lazy, creeping professor of such a religion be warranted to conclude, with confidence, that he is a

partaker of its heavenly spirit? How can he bring himself to the inspired standard, without reading the condemnation of his hopes, or having them, at least, clouded with many doubts and apprehensions? It is wisely and kindly ordered that even a real christian should doubt of his adoption, while he is thus cold and indifferent in the great work assigned to him. But surely this is a painful situation, one which we should anxiously seek to exchange for a better. And this is only to be done, by going forward with zealous affection in every good thing which lies before us; by acting as if we deemed nothing done for God, for Christ, for our fellow creatures, and for our own individual salvation, while any thing remains to be done. Thus engaged, our peace would flow like a majestic river; we should "know our election of God," call him our Father with an unwavering tongue, and rejoice in the firm hope of that "glory, honour, and immortality," which he has provided for his children beyond the skies.

In the next place, to do things with zeal is the way to do them pleasantly. It is not to be concealed that in the perversity and deceitfulness of our hearts, and in the objects and cares of the world where we live, we find many temptations to neglect the service of God altogether, or to perform it in a superficial and languid manner. The conviction of the understanding that these things ought not so to be is not sufficient to enable us to stem the current of opposition. We want a strong principle of action, able to weather every storm of trouble, and break through every obstacle in our way; and this principle is an ardent, steady zeal for God and righteousness. How irksome is any labour which is reluctantly performed, in which the affections of the heart are not enlisted! And is it right that our God and our Saviour should be served by us in this wretched style? It would be shameful to hesitate a moment about the answer to such a question. If then we would glorify God with a holy alacrity, let us love his service, let us delight in his laws. Let us so feel the constraining power of redeeming love, that we shall find enjoyment in bearing our Master's cross, and following him whithersoever he may lead us. Then shall we find indeed that "his commandments are not grievous;" and this shall be our "rejoicing, the testimony of our conscience that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have our conversation in the world."

Again, I observe that to do things zealously is the way to do them well. This is quite a proverbial maxim in regard to the pursuits of the present life. A sluggish or a divided mind can never attain to eminence in any thing. In every science,

in every art, a certain enthusiasm of feeling is indispensably requisite to excellence. Where this is wanting, no force of native talent can supply its place. On the other hand, we often see wonderful effects produced by even moderate powers, when the soul has been wholly and perseveringly put into the work. And has not our Lord and Saviour a right to be honoured with the very best obedience of which we are capable? Is it only in adorning our christian profession that we permit ourselves to be careless and slovenly? Shall we offer a lean, a maimed sacrifice to him who gave himself as a sacrifice to God for our sins, and redeemed us from hell with his most precious blood? God forbid! Far from us be the unworthy thought! Yet this we shall do, unless we are impelled to vigorous exertion by zeal for his glory and the advancement of his cause. Rejoicing then in that divine condescension by which any of our feeble performances are accepted, let us bring with us to the service of our gracious Master all our powers, with all the improvement of which they are susceptible, and all those grateful and devout affections which the gospel is so well calculated to inspire.

Once more, to pursue any object with stedfast zeal is the most likely method to be successful in the pursuit. He who seeks his own salvation in God's appointed way, and in hearty earnest, we are assured, shall not fail of being saved. In other things, it must be admitted that success is not always exactly proportioned to our exertions. It seems to be an important principle of the divine administration, both in the natural and the moral world, to exhibit our entire dependence upon God for every good thing, to impress us with the conviction that he owes us no favour, and that he will bestow his blessings as a sovereign, according to his own pleasure. I have not at any time seen more diligent cultivation of the earth than during the present season. But here is an awful wide-spreading drought, which parches our fertile soil into dust, and withers its scanty productions. Yet we believe that ploughing and sowing and weeding are the necessary and promising means of obtaining the fruits of the ground; and we shall not use these means the less hereafter because it has pleased God to render them in the present instance almost utterly ineffectual. So it is in our labours to promote the cause of religion and the salvation of souls. Much faithful labour of parents and ministers seems to be spent almost in vain, as to its direct success. Yet we feel warranted, both by the word of God and matter of fact, to assure ourselves that indefatigable zeal in the application of the means of grace, is the way to convert sinners and to build up the church of

God. Could we experience in ourselves and see in others an increase of this zealous affection, we should not hesitate to expect that very happy consequences would ensue. What was the exhortation of the Apostle to his beloved Timothy? "Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.—Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Neglect not the gift that is in thee,—Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto thy doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee." Though the Apostle could not mean to assure his excellent friend of the salvation of all his hearers, he certainly encouraged him to great zeal, as the most promising medium of extensive success in his ministry. This encouragement we have still, to stimulate our exertions in the best of all causes, the propagation of the gospel of Christ; and we ought to feel its sufficiency to arouse every one of us from our slumbers, and prompt us to use every public exertion, according to the abilities we possess and the stations we occupy, to cover the earth with the light of divine revelation, and bring every human soul into cordial subjection to Christ Jesus our Lord.

The reflections, my brethren, to which we have been attending are suited to place us low in humiliation before God. How cold, how very deficient is our zeal for his glory, compared with what it ought to be! And does not the solemn enquiry naturally arise in our breasts, how may we gain an increase of zealous affection in the discharge of our incumbent duties? I answer, in this great concern the Spirit of God alone can be our efficient helper; and we are to look to heaven for aid in the use of all the institutions which are appointed to promote our sanctification. Two of these I shall particularize at present, and dwell on them for a few concluding moments.

The first is earnest and unceasing prayer for this very blessing. There is no evil in our fallen nature too inveterate or too mighty to be eradicated by an omnipotent hand. This besetting insensibility of our hearts to objects of infinite magnitude is indeed a grievous disease: let us feel it to be so, and lay it with humble importunity before the great physician, until we obtain the cure. And while we thus pray for ourselves, let us earnestly ask the same blessing for one another. The fire of zeal may be enkindled in some one or a few bosoms, and spread thence to others around; and all this in answer to our repeated and united petitions. Surely prayer is

not a vain thing; and there are few objects which are more worthy to be prayed for than this.

The other means for improving our zeal which I would recommend to you, is much solemn meditation upon the example of our Lord Jesus Christ. Let us cherish a habit, let us make a business, of accompanying him from his cradle to his cross, observing the unquenchable ardor with which he prosecuted the work that was given him to do. In him all was life and activity; no disgust rendering his heavenly task distasteful, no sufferings prevailing with him to abandon it, no weariness benumbing his faculties for one moment of his laborious and trying pilgrimage. Let us intensely study and contemplate this bright pattern of the manner in which God claims to be served, until our hearts begin to "burn within us," and we find ourselves prompted and enabled, as by an impulse from heaven, to go and do likewise.

May God so bless us for his rich mercy's sake, and make us blessings to each other, and to all with whom we have to do; and to his name shall be the praise now and for ever.

MELANCTHON.

LAY-VIEWS OF THE SHORTER CATECHISM.

INTRODUCTION.

MAN, who cannot be every where to notice every thing, who does not even understand much of what is within his notice, must be ignorant of many things. This ignorance is only to be removed by information and instruction. Still man cannot remember every thing or give present attention to all things. Hence he needs, not only information and instruction concerning many objects of knowledge, but also to have the means of his information and instruction perpetuated by a permanent, accessible, intelligible memorial. With a striking adaptation, then, to his actual state, is man favoured with the holy scriptures of the Old and New Testament. These, given by Divine inspiration, are a permanent, accessible, intelligible memorial of what is to man the most useful of all knowledge. They teach him the end of his being,—how this end is to be attained,—and the relation, affecting this end and its attainment, which subsists between man and other beings. They address man in his own language according

to his ordinary conceptions, as if in condescension to his weakness; and embodying, as it were, what is purely spiritual, bring the loftiest objects of knowledge within the reach of his intellectual faculties.

The Shorter Catechism of the Presbyterian Church is a brief abstract of the system of Theology, deduced from holy writ, recognized by that church; and by several other Protestant churches and societies. Necessarily not so minute in details as the larger catechism and confession, it is perhaps more comprehensive, profound and logical. It was originally composed, nearly two centuries ago; and to be intelligible, must have been adapted to the then habits of thinking and modes of expressing thought. Yet so little did the changes which in such a tract of time take place in the signs of human thought, affect this admirable treatise, that in the year 1788 it was ratified and adopted by the Presbyterian church in these United States, and ever since retained, without alteration. They did well and wisely. No better form of sound words could they adopt. The form of question and answer is well adapted to an elementary treatise. The answers form distinct and independent propositions or definitions, remarkable for their pith, perspicuity and logical precision. In their connection they are to be understood as always consistent and concordant; but never contradictory. Thus understood they exhibit, in a small volume, a body of divinity, which, the more it is duly examined, the more will it excite our esteem and rise upon our admiration.—With these his sentiments of the admirable compend, which is to be the object of more detailed views, a lay-man has submitted his apology for Revelation, and the elements of what may be deemed his own erratic course. He means well; and will attain his end, should he be the instrument of attracting attention to what, he fears, is either wholly neglected or availed of only as an exercise of memory to the young and unthinking; but which, while it is well suited to the young and ignorant, merits consideration from the mature and well informed.

Question 1. “What is the chief end of man?”

Answer. “Man’s chief end is, to glorify God, and enjoy him forever.”

Let us suppose a man of mature faculties, not merely vegetating, but rising superior to mere animal life, yet ignorant of a Divine Being and providence, to turn his thought and reflections upon himself.—Why am I? With what design and to what end do I exist? would naturally be the first and most important enquiry of such an individual. He would readily recognize, that he had a *beginning* of existence. What he

could affirm of himself, he might reasonably extend to every individual man; and if to every individual, so to the whole species, to the whole kind. Reasoning analogically from the actions consequent upon his own will, and the power involved in them, he would infer, that he and the whole race were brought into existence by the power of a prior, and as proved by the fact, superior *being*, who so willed. As the effects of his own power, in their design and end, would be by him referred to his own mind and purpose in producing them; so to the mind and purpose of the prior being, of the creator of man, and not to the creature—the ulterior effect of a prior power, would he refer the design and end of his, of man's existence. So far, in conformity with revelation; which also refers the chief end of man to his creator God; (“For of him, and through him, “and to him, are all things; to whom be glory forever and “ever. Amen.”) would he be led by the obvious dictates of natural reason.—But further reason could not carry him.—The end itself, referred to the mind and purpose of the unknown creator, with the goods and ills connected with it, must be forever hid, unless revealed by the creator, who only could make known his own purpose.—Thus, revelation although it never contradicts, must often transcend, what right reason establishes.—In conformity with what might be deemed the first enquiry of rational man is the first question of the Catechism: the solicitude, which such enquiry might produce is met, if not obviated, by the second and its answer.

Question 2. “What rule hath God given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him?”

Answer. “The word of God, which is contained in the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him.”

Having referred the chief end of man to the mind or will and purpose of his creator, God; it is reason, that the word of God, making known this will and purpose, should be the only rule to direct us with regard to our chief end.

Question 3. “What do the scriptures principally teach?”

Answer. “The scriptures principally teach, what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man.”

The scriptures, being the word of God to man, refer in their whole scope to God, their author. This forms a marked distinction between them and mere human writings. They contain, it is true, historical notices of nations and individuals, and narratives of events in human affairs, which when referred to second causes, are denominated contingent, but all these serve evidently to illustrate the reign of the Most High, the

Divine Providence, the eternal and unchangeable purpose of Jehovah. They illustrate too the rule of direction derived from what they principally teach, even "what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man." They are ample for doctrine and practice; for faith and obedience.

What man ought to believe concerning God.

1st. As to his being and attributes,

Question 4. "What is God?"

Answer. God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth.

All, who admit the being of a God, deists as well as christians, will readily assent to the truth of every clause and member of this answer, stated, without reference to consequences, as a naked proposition. They will not deny to the Deity any attributes, which it ascribes to him. They will acknowledge, that He is a Spirit, and in his being and attributes, infinite, eternal and unchangeable. As other important truths may be deduced from or referred to those contained in this answer, we should endeavour to form the justest notions possible of the whole and every part of it. Right notions of the being and attributes of God must be the foundation of all true religious knowledge.

God is a Spirit, and so invisible, without body, parts or passions. In his being and attributes, He is infinite, eternal and unchangeable; to his mind, whatever was, is, or shall be, throughout his boundless dominions, all have been, are, and shall be eternally, continually, forever and altogether present. He is Jehovah, the eternal and everlasting I AM, unchangeable in his purposes, as he must be in his being and attributes. Hence, what may be predicated of Him *now*, ever was, and forever shall be predicable of him. So unlike is he in this to his finite creatures.

Question 5. "Are there more God's than one?"

Answer. "There is but one only, the living and true God."

Question 6. "How many persons are there in the Godhead?"

Answer. "There are three persons in the Godhead; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory."

By one of these propositions, we are guarded against Polytheism; and directed to the Divine unity expressly recognized in 1 Cor. viii. 4.—By the other we are informed, that in unity of the Godhead there be three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy-Ghost. The word person, as here applied,

is not authorized by scriptural usage, but it is, when well understood, most fit to express our thought of this mysterious unity and distinction. The mystery itself we forbear to investigate. That the Divine Being should be mysterious to us, we might reasonably infer.—Finite in our knowledge, in our being, we cannot comprehend the Infinite. Nay our own existence is enveloped with an awful mystery, which we cannot penetrate. How mysterious is the whole intellectual and mechanical process of what I am now about. I take for illustration a single, simple, familiar incident. I will it; and move my hand to the ink-stand. 'Tis done. The fact is manifest, but the mysterious power, by which it is performed, and of the exertion of which I have such intimate knowledge, baffles my research: and yet that power is mine. To us limited in capacity as we are, the mode (so to speak) of the Divine existence is necessarily mysterious. It surpasses our understandings. Instead, therefore, of indulging a vain and idle curiosity, and of prying into what transcends our powers; let us attend to the truth revealed: and, satisfied with the knowledge thus acquired, let us endeavour to improve it, as we ought, in reference to our chief end. Let us endeavour, in humble dependance on divine grace, to live a life of faith and holy obedience; and so according to our measure, glorify God, our Father in Heaven, the Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Father of Light and of Spirits, the Father of our mercies;—God the Son, our Redeemer; Immanuel, God with us; and God the Holy Spirit, the Sanctifier, by whom we are sealed to the day of redemption.

Question 7. “What are the decrees of God?”

Answer. “The decrees of God are, his eternal purposes according to the counsel of his will, whereby, for his own glory, he hath fore-ordained whatsoever comes to pass.”

This proposition intends to promote the illustration purely of the Divine character. It directs our notice to God in a two fold aspect:—To His BEING, as the pre-existent JEHOVAH;—and to his HIS KINGDOM governed by *eternal* and immutable laws. The word, “decrees,” expresses the periphrasis’ eternal purpose according to the counsel of His will. Awful and mysterious subject! No wonder, that they, who give it only a slight and superficial attention should cavil. Attaching to a word of infinite and eternal import, a meaning, finite and defective as their own understandings, they attribute to the subject a confusion or a void, which exists only in their own minds. To such the word “decrees” from its most frequent modern use, presents no higher thought, than is suggested by the contingent resolutions of human judicatories; which, from a *present* retrospection of the *past*, lead in

act to the *future*. Between such resolutions and the Divine decrees there is, there can be no analogy. Conceiving, or attempting to conceive, a notion of the one by the other, must necessarily lead to error.—The determinations announced by human laws, flowing from judgements a priori, having a more close resemblance, would furnish juster notions of the Divine decrees. But still vast must be the distance and difference; nay immense and inconceivable! between the manifested will and purpose of short-sighted finite man; and the will and purpose of the infinitely wise, mighty, eternal and unchangeable **JEHOVAH**, the sovereign legislator and governor of the universe:—the former mutable, variable, uncertain; the latter necessarily eternal and unchangeable; and so absolutely certain.

Question 8. “How doth God execute his decrees?”

Answer. “God executeth his decrees in the works of creation and providence.”

In the works of creation and providence, **GOD himself**, (and not any creature) according to the proposition, executes his decrees. In these his works **HE** is pleased to manifest his attributes and illustrate his glory to his intelligent creatures.—This should obviate all cavil and objection to the Divine decrees well understood. The works of God, (what **JEHOVAH** operates) cannot be else than the effects of his eternal and immutable purpose according to the counsel of his will. If what God has been declared to be (*A. 4.*) is true, they must be necessarily so. But the works of the creature are not, in strict propriety of speech, the works of the creator: for man does, what God forbids.—Man sins; but God is not, cannot be the author of Sin, because sin is itself something in thought or act opposed to God or to his will.—The decrees of God must then be so understood, as not offering violence to the will of the creatures;—and as establishing rather than taking away the liberty or contingency of second causes. How this is brought about, by the wisdom and power of the Almighty and the Infinite, may not be discerned or resolved by finite minds like ours, but that such is the established order of the Divine appointment, the scriptures sufficiently declare, right reason in its sober exercise acknowledges, and experience confirms.

Question 9. “What is the work of creation?”

Answer. “The work of creation is, God’s making all things of nothing, by the word of his power, in the space of six days, and all very good.”

All creation, whether of mind or brute-matter; of surd and passive, or of intelligent and active beings, must be referred and ascribed to the power of God, the infinite and eternal,

uncaused and uncreated Spirit. He is the great and only first cause, with whom alone resides *true* power.—He is strictly the only essential, efficient and final cause of all things: “for of him, through him, and to him are all things.” This the main affirmation in the proposition, deduced directly from scripture, recommends itself to unbiassed reason as the only just account of the existences, other than God himself, within the bounds of our knowledge and notice.—Shall the bold assertions, the visionary dreams of atheistical, atomical, philosophers, as they would be styled, so happily refuted and derided by the enlightened Cicero; or of their equally fanciful and impudent followers, the modern materialists, shake our faith and confidence in the truth? If we have but a portion of the natural good sense, which distinguished this celebrated Roman, this will be improbable, but if we avail of the light which beams (from the Gospel,) from the Sun of Righteousness, this cannot possibly happen. The works of creation present to thinking beings the first objects of attention in regard of time and duration. The creation of God, as it has reference to him, *must be*, like the creator in his being and attributes good.

Question 10. “How did God create man?”

Answer. “God created man male and female, after his own image, in knowledge, righteousness and holiness, with dominion over the creatures.”

Our own creation, as it most materially concerns us, is here, with great propriety, presented to our notice for special consideration. As the fitness itself of created things in their various aspects, when discerned by us; so also, the modes and forms of existences, whose fitness we do not discern, must be referred to the will of the creator. God made man, a one being of one kind; yet male and female. The matter whence his body was formed is here unnoticed, but what concerns him as a living soul has the merited attention. God made man after his own image. As God is a Spirit, this image or resemblance holds in regard of the spirit of man. Accordingly it is expressed and exemplified as consisting in knowledge, righteousness and holiness, with dominion over the creatures. Man a creature, and therefore finite, is exhibited in the proposition as endowed with intelligence and active power or dominion connected by a rightly attuned and holy will, dispositions and affections, which directly led to a right and holy application of his knowledge, in the exercise of the dominion or powers with which he was endowed. Hence he resembled, but in a finite degree, his maker, the infinite and sovereign ruler and disposer of all. Thus man as he came

from the hands of his maker, so to speak, appears not only an innocent; but a positive good being. He was fully disposed towards God; towards himself, and towards other creatures, as he ought, and only as he ought to be.

Question 11. "What are God's works of providence?"

Answer. "God's works of providence are, his most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing all his creatures, and all their actions."

God, in whom we live, and move, and have our being;—the supreme ruler and governor of his creation, the sovereign disposer of all events, not only preserves the creatures, he has made; but, in his government, conducted by general and immutable laws, exercises towards them a special and particular, as well as general providence. The divine government is necessarily most holy, wise and powerful. The divine laws, in like manner, are most holy, wise and fit, eternal and immutable. The particular providence of God, therefore, can never counteract; but must ever consist with his general, eternal and immutable laws. The laws prescribed by the Deity, by the best and wisest, by the infinitely wise and perfect being, must be adapted, perfectly adapted to the state of their subjects. The divine laws are of course most just, holy and good. On obeying them the perfect weal of God's moral creatures must absolutely depend: for in transgressing them, the creature departs, from what best suits its constitution of existence.

Question 12. "What special act of providence did God exercise towards man in the estate wherein he was created?"

Answer. "When God created man, he entered into a covenant of life with him, upon condition of perfect obedience; forbidding him to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and upon pain of death."

Man, although made after the Divine image, yet having a material body, was, by this matter, by his bodily organs, appetites and affections, allied not only to the animal creation; but also to the earth itself. To this state and constitution of existence it behoved, that the law prescribed to man by his God should be adapted. To maintain the Divine image unsullied, by holding, what of his being was merely material and animal, in due subordination to those governing spiritual powers, in which the Divine image consisted, was the principal law imposed upon him. As a test of obedience, he was forbidden to eat of the tree knowledge of good and evil, upon pain of death.—The fitness of the test is most obvious: The forbidden object recommended itself to the senses, which man had in common with other animals. As seen it was good for

food, agreeable to the palate, and pleasant to the eyes. It thus stimulated, or rather tended to stimulate desires excited by senses, which the lawful occupation of man called into most frequent exercise.—Nor was this all. To the desire of mere animal indulgence, which alone might offend by its grossness, was superadded, a seeming moral and intellectual excitement. The creator made it the tree of knowledge. The creature fallaciously deemed knowledge to be wisdom. It then was to be desired to make wise. In regard therefore of appetite and intellect the forbidden object appears a fit test of obedience. The fitness becomes still more apparent, when we consider the forbidden object with reference to the condition of the covenant, the sanction of the law. Violating this condition, in the very act, destroyed the Divine image;—proved the fact;—and, by the disorder, which it induced, tended to the death, which it threatened.—In the consideration of this, as of other subjects, we are prone to err from narrow views. In the institutions of Baptism and the Lord's Supper the signs are regarded by many as all important; and that without reference to what is signified by them. So here, obscurity is produced by regarding chiefly the sensible object and act, the test of obedience; instead of attending to the spirit of the law, the general and entire tenour of the covenant, and its moral intent. The law intended to preserve to man, created with understanding, will and active powers, the image of his maker; and to this end, prohibited to him the indulgence of that pride, which was the sin of those angels, who kept not their first estate; and the irregular indulgence of animal appetites, as degrading him from the state or rank assigned him by his God. The indulgence of pride, would prove him assimilated to devils:—as would the irregular indulgence of animal appetites and desires prove his dominion gone, his moral estate entirely ruined; and his affections withdrawn from the creator, the supreme excellence, and devoted to the creatures, his own inferiors:—nay to inanimate creation. So that instead of retaining dominion over the creatures; his subjection to them, and the entire perversion of his original estate ensued as of direct consequence.—This much was deemed necessary to explain the consistency in all its parts, so to speak, of the covenant of works; and to illustrate its terms. The law like its giver must remain ever immutable; although the test of obedience be varied to suit its subject, the mutable creature man.

Having considered, with reference to the chief end of man; the being of God as subsisting in three persons; his decrees as manifested in creation and general providence; and the particular providence of God, exercised towards man in the

estate, wherein he was created, we would here for a season pause; and avail, if permitted, of another opportunity to consider, in the order of our text, the estate of man, as it *now* is, and the economy of God as it applies to his estate. P. L.

REVIEW.

DWIGHT'S THEOLOGY.

(Continued from pa. 283.)

WE are now brought on our way, to the important subject of Justification. And here we are happy to find our author as sound and judicious as we could wish. He begins indeed, very naturally, with reverting to the covenant of Redemption, as the only basis of our acceptance with God. In this, the Supreme Being has formally agreed with our mediator, to give him a seed who shall be holy and happy forever. Of course, the sentence of the law cannot be executed against them. They must be pardoned, restored to favour, and welcomed to the joys of heaven. All this is included in the idea of their Justification. And how is this obtained? It flows from the free grace of God, *through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus*; that is, by his atonement. And the full benefit of this sacrifice is secured to those who receive it, by the operation of the Holy Spirit, working effectually in all who believe, and who are made the seed by faith. This is the substance of the doctrine, which our author illustrates, in general, with great propriety. We are not quite satisfied, however, with his account of faith, which he defines to be *confidence in the moral character of God*. This confidence, we think, is a necessary and delightful part of the composition; but not the whole. Faith itself, we take it, is rather a *cordial belief of the word of God, upon the testimony of the Spirit*: respecting what may, more particularly, be called the essence of that word, the doctrine of salvation through the righteousness of Christ. It implies, of course, many gracious affections, and confidence among the rest.*

The great doctrine of Regeneration, is now discussed at large, under the several heads of its author and his agency,

* See the Confession of Faith, Chapter XIV.

its necessity, and reality, its nature, its antecedents, attendants, consequences, and evidences. Its author is the Holy Spirit, who is truly God, not a mere attribute, as Arians and Socinians contend; but a Divine person. As to his agency, it is sovereign, and gracious. Our author however will not say that it is *irresistible*, as we commonly talk; but only that it is *unresisted*. But why this change of term. Our author himself admits, that in the very nature of the case, the agency of the Spirit in effectual calling, is always such as to secure its own triumph, by removing the very power of opposition in the will. But surely an influence of this kind, may well be called *irresistible*, according to the true meaning of the word, as used by Divines. And on the other hand, we can hardly say, in point of fact, that it is *unresisted*—except indeed in its final and victorious operation. The necessity of this agency in the work of regeneration, is proved from the word of God—and the nature of man.

“The question has been often asked, “*Why, since a holy mind can become sinful, a sinful mind may not also become holy?*” No preternatural agency,” it is observed, “is necessary to accomplish the former change, why is any such agency necessary to accomplish the latter? The extent of the change in both instances is exactly the same; the one being merely the converse of the other. It would seem, then, that the same physical powers, which are sufficient for the accomplishment of the former, must be sufficient, also, for the accomplishment of the latter. But by most men it is acknowledged, that the physical powers of the same being, when holy, are exactly the same, as when sinful; both the understanding and the will remaining, in the physical sense, unaltered. Where, then, lies the impossibility, or even the difficulty, of the supposition, that man can regenerate himself; or, which is the same thing, turn, of his own accord, from sin to holiness?”

“All these questions are in my view fairly asked; and all the principles, suggested, true. Still the conclusion is unsound, and will not follow. This, however, I am bound to prove in a manner equally fair; and the more especially as a great multitude of serious, and, I hope, good men have found, and still find, no little difficulty in their contemplations on this subject.”

“That a holy being should be capable of sinning seems not, in the nature of the case, to be a supposition, attended with any great difficulty. All beings, holy and sinful alike, relish and desire natural good, or happiness. This can be found in an endless multitude of objects. Of these some may be enjoyed lawfully, or consistently with the will of God: while others cannot. These however, so far as they are supposed capable of communicating happiness, are, still, naturally the objects of desire to holy beings, as truly as to sinful ones. All natural good, when perceived, is, by itself considered, desired of course by every percipient being. Now it is plain, that this good may, in a given case, appear so great to a holy being; may so engross his whole attention; may so far exclude from his mind other considerations, and among them those of his duty; as to induce him to seek the good in view at the expence of his duty. In this manner, I apprehend, the Angels, who fell, violated their duty; and our first parents, theirs. Nor do I see how holy beings, so long as they love natural good, and are placed in a world, where it is variously and amply provided, can fail of being exposed to temptations from this source; nor, if these temptations be supposed to possess a given degree of power, or, which is the same thing, to contain a given degree of

natural good, and to be set fully and exclusively before the mind, how such beings can fail, without peculiar Divine assistance, of being exposed to fall."

"In all this, however, there is nothing to countenance the supposition, that a sinner will in the same manner turn from sin to holiness. A sinner has no relish for spiritual good; that is, for the enjoyment, furnished by virtuous affections and virtuous conduct. To apply the words of *Isaiah* concerning Christ, as regarded by the *Jews*, to this good, as regarded by sinners, *When they see it, there is no beauty in it, that they should desire it.* Is. liii. 2. Whenever this good, therefore, becomes an object of the sinner's contemplation, as his mind is wholly destitute of any relish for it, he will never desire it for its own sake; and will never make any such efforts to gain it, as are absolutely necessary to accomplish the renovation of his heart. The relish for spiritual good is that state of mind, out of which all virtuous volitions spring. No volition is ever excited but by good; and by good, actually perceived, and relished. As spiritual good is never thus perceived by a sinner; it will not excite a single volition in his mind towards the attainment of it; but will operate upon him as little, as harmony upon the deaf, or beautiful colours upon the blind."

"But, the relish for spiritual good is the characteristic distinction of holy beings; their *essential* characteristic; without which they would cease to be holy. The want of it, on the contrary, is a primary characteristic of sinful beings. In this lies the real difficulty of regenerating ourselves, and not in the want of sufficient natural powers: and, so long as this continues, an extraneous agency must be absolutely necessary for our regeneration."

pa. 42, 3, 4.

The necessity of regeneration is well argued from the native depravity of mankind. Its *reality* is proved by the scriptures, and by experience. Our author insists particularly upon "the state of christianity in the world at large," as a fact in point.

"The history of real Christianity is not to be sought for in the accounts; given us of the life, policy, ambition, and violence, of such Rulers, Statesmen, and Warriors, as have assumed the Christian name. The real nature, and influence, of the religion of Christ are not to be sought for in Camps and Cabinets, in Courts and Palaces. These are the seats of pride and luxury, ambition and cunning, wrath and revenge. Christianity, here, is only put on as an upper garment, to adorn the character, to comport with the fashion, or to cover unchristian designs. I do not intend, that this is always the case. There are undoubtedly good men to be found even here. But I mean, that it is much more generally the case, than a good man would wish, or be willing, it should be. When Infidels take their accounts of Christianity from the proceedings of the great; from their luxury, statecraft, conquests, and persecutions; they do not, and probably intend not to do, any justice to the subject. In these accounts they impose on their readers, and perhaps on themselves. But they deceive no man of common candour, and tolerable information."

"The real effects of Christianity on mankind are to be sought, and found, in still life, quiet society, peaceful neighbourhoods, and well ordered families. Here a thousand kind offices are done, and a thousand excellencies manifested, of which the great and splendid rarely form a conception; and which, nevertheless, present the human character to the view of the mind with an aspect incomparably more lovely than any other."

"But, even on the great scale of examination, Christianity has meliorated the affairs of this unhappy world in such a degree, as, if thoroughly examined, strongly to evince the truth of this doctrine. If we compare the state of Christian nations, especially the most enlightened and virtuous of them,

with that of the most improved Heathen nations; the only fair mode of instituting a comparison; we shall see ample proof of such a melioration of the human character, as can be justly attributed to nothing but this important change of the human heart. Christianity has removed, from among the nations who profess it, polygamy; the selling of children, as slaves, by their parents; the general and brutal degradation of women; the belief of the rectitude of slavery; the supposed right of masters to kill their slaves; the exposure of parents, in their old age, to be devoured by wild beasts; the same exposure of children by their parents; the sacrificing of human victims; the wanton destruction of human life, for amusement, in public games; the impure, brutal, and sanguinary worship, practised in the regions of idolatry; together with many of the horrors of war, and captivity, and many other enormous evils of a similar nature. At the same time, it has introduced milder and more equitable government; established equitable laws, by which nations have, in a considerable degree, regulated their intercourse; given a new sanction to treaties; provided legal support for the poor and suffering; secured the rights of strangers; erected hospitals for the sick, and alms-houses for the indigent; formed, with great expence, a rich variety of institutions for the preservation, and education, of orphans; the instruction of poor children; the suppression of vice; the amendment of the vicious; and the consolation of the afflicted. It has made better rulers, and better subjects; better husbands, and better wives; better parents, and better children; better neighbours, and better friends. It has established the rational worship of the One, Living, and True God; built churches, in which all men do, or may, worship him, and learn their duty; and with immense expense, has sent, and is sending, these blessings to the ends of the earth. Whence this difference? Not from the difference of light. The *Greeks* and *Romans* were sufficiently enlightened at least to have begun this progress. But they did not take a single step towards real reformation. All that can be said is, *their* wickedness was a little more polished, than that of their barbarian neighbours. No; it has sprung from that *honest and good heart*, which is not in man by nature, but is given him by the Spirit of God. Such hearts found here and there, like dispersed stars, seen through the interstices of a cloudy sky, diffuse a feeble radiance over Christian countries, and prevent the otherwise absolute darkness. *Howard*, intensely illumined with the benevolence of the Gospel, shed a lustre over the whole Christian world. Inferior lights are every where scattered; and their combined influence is every where felt. Were the same character that of all men; the change in human affairs would be such, as to demand no arguments to prove a change of heart. As the state of things is, it is plain, that the spirit of the Martyrs was not in their persecutors: the spirit of *Howard* was not in *Voltaire*: the spirit of *Alfred* was not in *Frederic II.* He, who cannot see this, is unable because he will not; and may be well assured, that under the influence of his present temper he has lost the power of moral discrimination."

pa. 59, 60, 61.

With regard to the *nature* of this change, our author holds that the Spirit regenerates us, "not by creating in us virtuous volition" merely, (according to the strange theory of certain metaphysical Divines,) but a good disposition, or heart. He goes on to observe, that this change is the very "commencement of holiness in the mind," that it is "partial," (that is, not perfect;) but still "the foundation of perpetual holiness." He further maintains, that it is "the source of new views of spiritual and divine subjects." And here he takes occasion to give us a general idea of the nature of the work.

“It has been extensively supposed, that the Spirit of Grace regenerates mankind by communicating to them new, clearer, and juster views of spiritual objects. The understanding being thus enlightened and convinced, the heart, it is supposed, yields itself to this conviction; and the man spontaneously becomes, under its influence, a child of God. I shall not attempt, here, to describe the Metaphysical nature of the work of regeneration, nor to define, precisely, the manner, in which it is accomplished; nor the exact bounds of the Divine, and human, agency in this great concern. Of these subjects I have not sufficiently distinct and comprehensive views, to undertake this employment with any satisfactory hope of success. Yet it appears to me clear, that the account, which I have now given of this subject, is not Scriptural, nor just. Without a *relish* for spiritual objects, I cannot see, that any discoveries concerning them, however clear and bright, can render them pleasing to the soul. If they are displeasing in their very nature, they cannot be made agreeable by having that nature unfolded more clearly. He, who disrelishes the taste of wine, will not relish it the more, the more distinctly, and perfectly, he perceives that taste. Nor will any account of its agreeableness to others, however clearly given, and with whatever evidence supported, render the taste agreeable to him. To enable him to relish it, it seems indispensable, that his own taste should be changed, and in this manner fitted to realize the pleasantness of the wine. *Light* is either evidence, or the perception of it; evidence of the true nature of the object, which is contemplated, or the perception of that evidence. But the great difficulty in the present case is this; the nature of the object perceived is disrelished. The more, then, it is perceived, the more it must be disrelished of course, so long as the present taste continues. It seems, therefore, indispensable, that, in order to the usefulness of such superior light to the mind, its relish with respect to spiritual objects should first be changed. In this case, the clearer and brighter the views of such objects are, the more pleasing they may be expected to become to the mind.”

This, I apprehend, is the true progress of this work in the human soul. A relish for all spiritual objects, never before existing in him, is communicated to every man, who is the subject of regeneration, by the Spirit of God. Before this event, he disrelished all such objects: now, he relishes them all. Before, he was an enemy of God: now, he becomes a friend to God: before, he loved nothing, now, he loves every thing of a spiritual nature. He who has hitherto, been an enemy to a good man, disrelishes every thing which pertains to him; his character, conduct, conversation and opinions; his family, his friends, his very looks, nay, even the spot where he lives; and, in a word, every thing which is his. If you undertake to convince him, while this disrelish continues, that the object of his dislike is undeserving of all this; you may, indeed, present to him arguments, which he cannot answer, and silence his objections, by the irresistible force of proof. You may explain to him, in the clearest manner, the excellencies of his object; and set them in such a light, that he may have nothing left to say against it. Should all this have been done, his dislike, in the case supposed, would still continue: his views, though enlarged, would be of exactly the same general nature: and his opposition to the hated object, instead of being diminished, would rather increase. We will now suppose this man to cease from his enmity, and to become a decided and sincere friend. A moment's thought will satisfy any mind, that with the change of his relish, an universal change of his views, also, will take place. The very same things which formerly disgusted him, will now please him. What was formerly odious will now become amiable. The evidences of worth and excellence, which before silenced, will now satisfy him. His eye, no longer jaundiced, will see every thing in its proper, native light; in its true character, importance, and desert; and will discern in what was before displeasing, deformed, or disgusting, a beauty, loveliness, and lustre, wholly new.”

“This allusion will distinctly explain my own views of both the source, and the nature, of Spiritual light. When the relish for spiritual objects is communicated to the mind, the enmity of the man towards these objects is converted into good-will. He now becomes a friend to God and to his Law, to truth and to duty. Over these and all other objects, of the same general nature, he sees a new character diffused, of which, before, he did not form a single conception. Where they were before disgusting, they are now pleasing. Where they were before tasteless, they are now relished. Where they were before deformed, they are now beautiful. Where they were before odious, they are now lovely. The reason is; he now beholds them with new eyes. Before, he saw them with the eyes of an enemy; now, he sees them with those of a friend. The optics, which he formerly possessed, spread over them an adventitious and false colouring, altogether foreign to their nature, and exhibiting that nature under an universal disguise. These optics are now purified; and he sees all these objects as they really are; in their true colours, their native beauty, and their inherent splendour. This is what I understand by *the Spiritual light*, derived from regeneration.”

pa. 67, 68, 69, 70.

Our author next maintains, that “this change is instantaneous;” but yet, distinguishing, as he ought to do, the evidence from the fact, he remarks that the “time and manner of its existence,” (that is, of its commencement) “is ordinarily imperceptible by him who is the subject of it.” (pa. 72.) The observation is just, and the proof convincing. We recommend the passage to the notice of our readers. He then closes the subject with the illustration of the general remark, “the work of regeneration is worthy of the Spirit of God,” in the following words:

“*Regeneration is a change of the temper, or disposition, or in other words, of the heart of man; and, by consequence, of his whole character.* The heart is the great controlling power of a rational being; the whole of that energy, by which he is moved to action. The moral nature of this power, therefore, will be the moral nature of the man. If this be virtuous, all his other faculties will be rendered means of virtue; if sinful, the means of sin. Thus regeneration will affect the whole man; and govern all his character, powers, and conduct.”

“Regeneration is of the highest importance to man, as a subject of Divine Government. With his former disposition, he was a rebel against God: with this, he becomes cheerfully an obedient subject. Of an enemy he becomes a friend; of an Apostate he becomes a child. His obedience is henceforth filial, accepted of God, and useful to the Universe. From the debased, hateful, miserable character of sin he makes a final escape; and begins the glorious and eternal career of virtue. The deformity, disgrace, and contempt, of which sin is the parent, and the substance, he exchanges for moral excellence, loveliness, and beauty.”

“With this character, his destination is equally changed. In his native condition he was a child of wrath, an object of abhorrence, and an heir of woe. Evil, in an unceasing and interminable progress, was his lot; the regions of sorrow and despair, his everlasting home; and fiends, and fiend-like men, his eternal companions. His own bosom was the house of remorse; while a conscience, unceasingly wounded by his sin, held up his eye to the image of guilt, and the predictions of misery; and filled him with immovable terror and amazement. On his character good beings looked with detestation, and on his ruin, with pity: while evil beings beheld both with that satanic pleasure, which a reprobate mind can enjoy at the sight of companionship in turpitude and destruction.”

“But, when he becomes the subject of this great and happy change of character, all things connected with him are also changed. His unbelief, impenitence, hatred of God, rejection of Christ, and resistance to the Spirit of grace, he has voluntarily and ingenuously renounced. No more rebellious impious, or ungrateful, he has assumed the amiable spirit of submission, repentance, confidence, hope, gratitude, and love. The image of his Maker is instamped on his mind; and begins there to shine with moral and eternal beauty. The seeds of immortality have there sprung up, as in a kindly soil; and, warmed by the life-giving beams of the Sun of righteousness, and refreshed by the dewy influence of the Spirit of Grace, rise, and bloom, and flourish, with increasing vigour. In him, sin, and the flesh, and the world, daily decay; and daily announce their approaching dissolution: while the soul continually assumes new life and virtue, and is animated with superior and undying energy. He is now a joint heir with Christ, and the destined inhabitant of heaven. The gates of glory and of happiness are already opened to receive him; and the joy of Saints and Angels has been renewed over his repentance. All around him is peace: all before him purity and transport. God is his Father; Christ his Redeemer; and the Spirit of Truth his Sanctifier. Heaven is his eternal habitation: virtue is his immortal character: and seraphim, and cherubim, and all the children of light, are his companions for ever. Henceforth he becomes, of course, a rich blessing to the Universe. All good beings, nay, God himself, will rejoice in him for ever, as a valuable accession to the great kingdom of righteousness, as a real addition to the mass of created good, and as a humble, but faithful, and honourable, instrument of the everlasting praise of heaven. He is a vessel of infinite mercy; an illustrious trophy of the cross; a gem in the crown of glory, which adorns the Redeemer of mankind.”

“Of all these sublime attainments, these exalted blessings, these divine allotments, Regeneration is the beginning. What, then, can be more worthy of the Spirit of truth? What effort in creation, what event in providence, is more becoming his character? The rise of an empire, the formation of a world, is a poor and humble display of infinite perfection, compared with the sanctification of an immortal mind. In the progress of eternity, one such mind will enjoy more good, exercise more virtue, and display more excellency of character, than this great world of men has ever enjoyed, exercised, or displayed. Accordingly, God himself divinely characterizes this illustrious work in the following magnificent terms: *For behold I create new heavens, and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered, neither come into mind. But be ye glad, and rejoice for ever, in that which I create; for behold! I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and my people a joy.* Of such importance and glory is the new creation, or regeneration, of the soul of man, that, in comparison with it, the original formation of the heavens and the earth is, in the Divine eye, unworthy even of being remembered. It was, therefore, a work proper for God the Father to contrive; for God the Son to procure even with his own death; and for God the Holy Spirit to accomplish with his life-giving and almighty power in the souls of the guilty, ruined, and perishing children of *Adam.*”—pa. 75, 76, 77.

In considering the antecedents of Regeneration, our author begins to give us some account of the mysterious process of conversion. He explains particularly, the cause, nature and consequences of conviction, in a manner which will be recognized as just, by every one who has passed through this *fiery ordeal* of the law. Proceeding then to consider the *attendants* of Regeneration, he explains the nature of conversion itself.

“When the sinner has come to this state of discernment and feeling, in which his character, danger, and necessity of deliverance, are thus realized,

and has thus cast himself, as a mere suppliant for mercy, at the footstool of divine grace, God, as has been already observed, gives him a new and virtuous disposition; styled in the Scriptures *a new heart; a right spirit; an honest and good heart; the good treasure of a good heart;* and by several other names, of like import. That Act of the Spirit of God, by which this disposition is communicated; that is, the act of regenerating man, and the Disposition itself which is communicated, I cannot be expected to describe. Neither of these things can, in the abstract, be known, or even contemplated, by such minds as ours. Not a single idea would ever be formed concerning the nature, or existence, of either, were they not discovered by *their effects;* or, as they are called in the Gospel, *their fruits.* It may, however, be useful to repeat, that what I intend by this disposition is *the cause, which in the mind of man produces all virtuous affections and volitions; the state, in which the mind is universally possessed of a tendency to the Evangelical character, or the tendency itself, of the mind towards all that, which in the character is morally excellent.* The existence of this disposition is proved by its effects; and in these only can it be seen. As these are new, and before unknown, it follows irresistibly, that the cause is equally new. This is, also, abundantly taught by the Scriptures; in which the disposition itself is called *a new heart;* the man, who becomes a subject of it, *a new creature;* and the life; proceeding from it, *newness of life.*"—pa. 104, 5.

The effects of this conversion, (in which its nature and reality are best seen,) are faith, repentance, and love. Faith has been considered already. Repentance is now well explained, as involving just views of sin, hatred of it, sorrow for it, confession, and reformation. The topic is closed with the observation, that "repentance is absolutely necessary to salvation."

"Without Repentance, the sinner would still continue to be a sinner; an enemy to holiness and to God, to happiness and to heaven. If he did not hate sin, it would be *physically* impossible, that he should forsake it; that he should love or practise holiness; that he should be cordially reconciled to God; that he should relish the happiness of heaven; or that he should desire, or enjoy, the friendship of virtuous beings. It would be impossible, that he should receive Christ as his Saviour; trust in his righteousness for acceptance; love his character; or welcome his mediation. At the same time, it would be *morally* impossible, that God should receive, or justify, the sinner; unite him to his family; or restore him to his favour. To all these things Repentance is plainly, and absolutely indispensable."

"The views, which the penitent entertains of moral subjects, and the affections, with which he regards them, prepare him, and are indispensably necessary to prepare him, to partake of the favour of God, the employments of holiness, and the blessings of Redemption. Evangelical Repentance is the beginning of moral health in the soul. At the commencement of its existence, the former, evil, morbid principles begin to lose their hold, and to have their power diminished. The divine Physician then first achieves his victory over the moral diseases, which were before incurable; and the balm of *Gilead* begins to restore its decayed and ruined faculties. From this moment, immortal health, the life of Heaven, returns to the languishing mind; health that cannot decay, life that cannot terminate: the youth of angels, which cannot grow old, but is formed to increase, and bloom, and flourish for ever."—pa. 123, 4.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCE.

SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

{The following is the Report of the Lovington Sunday School, to which reference was made in our last number. Having, through the kindness of a friend, procured another copy, we with pleasure insert it in the Magazine.

It is with extreme regret and equal surprize that we hear of opposition to benevolent institutions of this kind in some parts of our country. We do not impute any measures adopted by any of our fellow men to malignant motives, without the most positive and decisive evidence. If any have a fair opportunity of seeing the beneficial effects of Sabbath Schools, and then oppose them; we can hardly attribute such conduct to any thing but aversion to good — And if any make opposition, without careful examination, they are certainly rash and imprudent. Perhaps, however, this whole thing arises from sheer ignorance; and the aversion which ignorance always feels to the propagation of knowledge.

Notwithstanding these observations, in general Sabbath Schools meet with remarkable encouragement in our country; and are doing not a little good. They are a charity “twice blest” for the teachers almost universally are greatly improved, while communicating the elements of education to the young, and imbuing their minds with the principles of a sound morality.]

From the Lynchburg Press.

THE SABBATH SCHOOL SOCIETY of the town of Lovington, in the county of Nelson, beg leave, through you, to offer to the public some account of the nature and progress of their undertaking, in the hope that others may be encouraged by their success to engage in the same work of *humble* but *useful* benevolence. It is not given to many, in the course of Providence, to be distinguished as the *benefactors* of their race by any great and signal services, which history records and hands down to the admiration of posterity; but there are scarcely any, however noiseless and obscure the path of life which they pursue, or however moderate the talent with which they may be gifted, who cannot, *in some way or other*, be instrumental in promoting the design of Divine Goodness. Indeed, if every individual, in the narrow circle of his

own family and neighbourhood, were to improve all the *little opportunities* of doing good which continually present themselves, their *aggregate* labours would be of infinitely more effect in ameliorating the condition of society than all the plans that statesmen ever formed, or all the battles that generals ever won. Animated by these views, and a desire to be useful in the stations which Providence had allotted them, and believing, from authentic testimony, that effects of the most important character, had been produced, in other parts of the world, by the modern invention of Sunday schools; a few persons of both sexes, residing in Lovington and its vicinity, associated themselves for the purpose of gratuitously instructing, on the Sabbath, any (whites) who might be disposed to embrace the offer; but particularly such as were debarred by the

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necessity of daily labour, from every other opportunity of learning. It is here due to our fair countrywomen, *who are ever foremost in works of charity*, to state that the idea of this institution originated with them, and that they have been uniformly its best patrons and most active servants. The first meeting of the school was on Sunday, the 21st of March, when about thirty scholars attended. The beginning being thus made, the attention of the public was soon excited, and each succeeding Sabbath brought a large accession to the number. Eleven Sabbaths have elapsed, since the commencement of the school, and the whole number of scholars now amounts to one hundred and thirty, giving an average increase of ten for every Sabbath. The institution is still extending its limits, so as to embrace a larger portion of the community, week after week, and such have been the decisive marks of public favor bestowed on it, that there is reason to believe its growth will cease only at the point, where the actual population of the circumjacent neighbourhood stops. There is a considerable number of persons attending this school, who are also instructed in regular weekly schools; but the majority consists of such as go to no other school, and depend entirely on eleemosynary instruction. The intermixture of these two classes has not only been attended with perfect harmony, but has been found productive of a salutary spirit of emulation. While the former have been enabled by the advances, made in the schools, to help on their less fortunate neighbours in the path of learning; these have been animated, in their turn, by a generous desire to overtake their leaders, and share the prize of education with them. Under this excitement, and the strong stimulus derived from the circumstance of the operations of the school being conducted in the view of numerous and respectable spectators, the progress of some of the scholars, who were not even initiated in the alphabet when they commenced, has been *and almost incredible*. There are several of this description,

who, in the course of eleven Sundays, have advanced, *from a perfect state of nature as to mind*, to be able to read now with as much fluency and correctness as many boys who have been at Latin schools for two or three years. The benefits of this school have not been confined to the young. It is a melancholy, and at the same time, a gratifying spectacle to behold several *adults*, men and women, mingling with their own children in pursuit of knowledge, and endeavouring, with praise-worthy zeal, to throw off the bondage of ignorance, which neglect or poverty in early life had entailed upon them. These have *felt* full sorely the evils which follow in the train of ignorance, and their exertions to acquire knowledge are accompanied with that sort of *desperate energy*, which marks the efforts of a human being struggling for life. How much do these unfortunate people owe to the institutions of Sunday Schools, which may be said, with almost literal truth, to have given them *a new existence!*

A general idea may be formed of the success with which this institution has been conducted, from the following facts exhibited by a late report of the superintendants of the school to the visitors. On the first Sabbath that the school was organized, the scholars committed to memory and recited 145 verses in the Bible. On the eleventh Sabbath 1064 verses in the Bible and 340 verses of the hymns were committed to memory and recited; and on the intermediate Sabbaths, a number of each increasing, by regular gradations, from 145 to 1064 verses in the Bible, and from none to 340 verses of the hymns. The aggregate number committed to memory and recited in all the eleven Sabbaths was 7316 verses in the Bible, and 898 verses of the hymns. It is to be remarked, too, that not more than forty of the scholars were, at any time, sufficiently advanced to commit the Bible and hymns to memory. The rest, consisting of those who came more recently to the school were employed in the preliminary stages of learning the alphabet and spelling, or could not read well

enough to be put to memorising. These details and observations are submitted by the founders of the Lovington Sunday School, to the candid consideration of their fellow-citizens, hoping that, in the success of the experiment they have made, a proof will be afforded of the usefulness and efficacy of institutions of this sort, in our own, as well as other countries which have longer experienced the benefit of them; and trusting that their example will be thought worthy of imitation by the patriotic and benevolent in every part of the commonwealth.

Nelson, June 7, 1819.

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Anniversary of the Richmond Sunday School Union Society.

Extract from the proceedings of the Richmond Sunday School Union Society, at their annual meeting held at the Presbyterian Church on Monday, the 13th inst.

Resolved, That the thanks of this Society be given to the Superintendants, Teachers, Secretaries and Visitors of absentee children, of the various Schools belonging to this Union.

Resolved, That this Society rejoices to see Sunday Schools extending through the neighboring country, and hails them as important coadjutors in the cause of humanity and religion.

Resolved, That any Sunday School now established, or that may hereafter be established in the country, and who shall desire to communicate with this Society, shall be entitled to send two representatives to the annual meeting of the Society.

Resolved, That the Constitution of this Society be so altered, that the annual meetings shall hereafter be held on the second Monday in June, instead of the second Monday in September.

Resolved, That the several Editors in this city be requested to publish the Annual Report in their respective papers.

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ANNUAL REPORT.

Of the Board of Directors of the Richmond Sunday School Union Society.

When called to the contemplation of surrounding scenes; and expatiat-

ing on the moral condition of Society, even in the best aspect which it exhibits, how much is there to lament of prevalent turpitude—how little to hope, from the apparently weak and inefficient barriers that oppose the flood of iniquity which already formidable, continually gathers strength as it rolls on, and threatens to overwhelm the fair fields that lie exposed to its desolating career.

To the cold and calculating eye of reason there remains but a disheartening prospect, that in a considerable portion of society, confirmed habits shall chain down their subjects to the thralldom of sin; while succeeding generations, looking up with imitative zeal, shall take from their progenitors the hue and stamp, which, “growing with their growth and strengthening with their strength,” shall shortly exhibit them in heightened colors, the legitimate offspring of a degenerate race.

But to the eye of faith, not even these dismal clouds, can shut out the ray of hope which beams from the revealed truth of God. In the glorious Gospel are beheld those principles of renovation and improvement, which are all sufficient, successfully to oppose the mighty torrent of iniquity, to subdue the warring passions of our race, and introduce peace, and love, and joy into a world of sin and suffering.

Animated by his hope, and encouraged by these assurances, the followers of Him, whose peculiar characteristic it was to go about doing good, have ever been conspicuous in their zealous and active labours to promote the highest interests of their fellow men; yet after centuries of experience, and of the activities of christian benevolence, it appears to have been reserved to the present age, to originate those enlightened and extensive charities, which in concurrence with the ordained preaching of the word, do, in their operation, seem to unfold the dawn of that glorious day, when the light of the Gospel shall shine throughout the earth, and its pure principles pervade and control all hearts. In Bible and Tract Societies and Sunday Schools, we

perceive mighty auxiliaries, destined by the blessing of God to the pulling down the strong holds of sin, and establishing the reign of Emanuel throughout the world.

Called by this occasion to attend more particularly to the subject of Sunday Schools; the Directors rejoice that they can come to the Society with abundant testimony of their increasing extent and usefulness. From every quarter are received the most animating accounts that in this charity, requiring as it does peculiarly, the duties of self-denial and patient exertion, the hands and the hearts of many are engaged with persevering and increasing zeal, activity and success. In Great Britain and in this country, the experience of each succeeding year, strengthens the assurance that Sunday Schools without ostentation and unassuming as they be, are in their progress silently undermining and striking at the very root of those evil habits and propensities which contribute to mar the fair face of society, and cause humanity to weep.

The Directors are particularly gratified to state the formation and establishment of numerous Schools in this and the neighbouring counties, of which though they cannot report specially, they are assured that scarcely an effort has been made that has not been crowned with success beyond expectation; and they have to state, that in July last applications were made by eight Sabbath Schools in the county of Goochland and its borders, to be received in connection with this society; and they were accordingly received as auxiliaries. These Schools at the time of application consisted of 275 scholars; and have since doubtless increased. Various other country Schools have applied for books and other helps, which have been cordially afforded, so far as in the power of this society.

In attending to the Schools immediately under their care, the Directors are happy to say that to them, these general observations may be particularly applied.—In the experience of the past year, they find an assurance of permanent good to result

from the assiduity and attention of the superintendants and teachers in their respective stations. It could not but be feared that in a vocation calling for so much forbearance and painstaking zeal, some hands would hang down and weariness dull the edge of application: but far from this is the fact.—We can hardly find a solitary instance of a teacher who has put his hand to the plough and willingly turned back. For a short period, however, after our last annual meeting, two of our Schools exhibited manifest symptoms of decline, and of one it seemed doubtful whether Richmond would not exhibit an anomaly in the history of modern christian charities, and we should be compelled to confess that this Heaven-born plant was not congenial to our soil. The idea was electric in its influence; every mind was roused, and every heart was animated to the effort. Speedily the Schools assumed a new aspect; their numbers increased and activity prevailed; and for the last six months, each School has exhibited a scene of regularity, decorum, and industry, we believe seldom surpassed. So that of the teachers it has been said that “assiduity and promptitude are prominent features in their character—duties are in their estimation converted into privileges, and good proof given that the whole are actuated by the genuine spirit of philanthropy.”

The Directors have much pleasure in reporting to the Society, the formation of a School in Manchester which has been received into the the union. This School has been well organized and in full operation for three months past, and gives good assurance of exerting a benign influence in that place.

The present numbers in the Schools of the Union, are shewn in the following table:

SCHOOLS.	Scholars on registers.	Usually attending.	Teachers.
No. 1	183	88	14
2	190	120	22
3	162	80	14
(Manchester) 4	72	48	8
Total.	607	336	58

By which it appears the schools have, during the past year, increased nearly one half on the previous numbers of the registers, and there is a still greater proportionate increase of regular attendants within six months past; and this during the warm season, in which there is usually a diminution of numbers and activity.

Referring to the improvement of the scholars, the Directors would remark that, among those who are in the first elements of education, the progress is in general unavoidably slow—yet even here, there are not wanting instances of rapid progress, insomuch that to some, the improvement of a few hours of the sabbath seems to countervail the loss of the week. The higher classes exhibit of course a similar variety of disposition and intellect: in many of them, especially in females, the acquirements are surprising; and to detail the monthly amount recited of chapters in the bible, answers and references, hymns, catechisms, &c. would give the semblance of exaggeration.

With those who regard the highest object of Sunday Schools—the melioration of the heart through the reception of the saving knowledge of the truth, the enquiry will arise; What is effected towards this great end? We hope much. There are several cases of which the best opinion is entertained. But while we would not be too sanguine as to the most favourable appearances in such youthful subjects, we may confidently rely, that foundations are laid, on which superstructures shall arise to manifest the grace of our Emanuel.

Though we see not now the best fruit of our exertions and our prayers, yet we may hereafter; and if, as we trust, this be a work of faith and love, we may confidently leave the result with Him, who when on earth, took little children in his arms and blessed them, declaring of such is the kingdom of heaven. It is ours to plant and to water; the increase is of God.

The schools are much indebted for the success of the last two quarters, to the superintending committee, and to the vigilance and activity of the visitors of the absentees. The services of the latter cannot be too

highly appreciated, and when we look to the general character of that portion of our population, to which Sunday Schools are peculiarly adapted; in their indifference, and in the lack of parental authority and restraint, are seen the most formidable obstacles to complete success. It is to this point, that we would direct the attention and the efforts of those who desire to see Sunday Schools effective to their full scope and extent. To repair or obviate these defects, is required all that ardour and perseverance which we have had the pleasure to see in some instances happily illustrated.—Let it not be thought that in the present goodly condition of our schools, the great object is accomplished: there is still much room for improvement—There are many yet around us, who perhaps have not heard the invitation to come in; there are many who need to be compelled by the persuasive influence of exhortation and example to partake the benefits of which they are careless, either for themselves or for their children.

Let none then set down under the fallacious supposition that the field is won, and that henceforth Sunday Schools, having taken root, shall grow and flourish in all their vigour, and disperse around the blessings of moral and religious improvement, while they indolently enjoy the pleasing scene.—No, there remaineth much land to be possessed; there is a great work to do, and he that would share in the reward, let him share the toil.

In conclusion, the directors are compelled to allude to a subject of less pleasing nature. By the Treasurer's account, it appears that he is in advance to the society for a small amount and it is believed that the current expenses of several months remain unpaid. There is no resource on which to draw for the present deficiency or for future supplies, but on the liberality of the friends of this institution. And shall so important a charity be embarrassed and languish for want of the small contributions it requires to sustain and cherish it?

The sum thrown away on a single evening's public amusement, would more than defray the charges of a year

in providing for hundreds of children the means of preparing for usefulness in life, and hope in death.—The Directors will not doubt of receiving that efficient aid which shall support and encourage the object of their solicitude.

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Eight Schools in the county of Goochland, and its borders, containing nearly three hundred scholars, have connected themselves with the Sunday School Union.

This has also been done by the Sunday School at Hampden Sidney College. In that school "there are forty eight scholars who generally attend very well, and make good progress." Two other schools have been organized in the county of Prince Edward: one at Buffaloe, which has nearly seventy scholars connected with it; and the other at the Grove Meeting house, with about forty scholars. These schools will probably be united to the Union Society of Richmond. The formation of them has excited considerable interest in the neighbourhood; and it is to be hoped they will do considerable good.

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[We are sorry that the following communication was not received in time for the last number. We insert it with pleasure; both in justice to ourselves, and the friend of our correspondent, of whom, in more ways than one, we have heard the most excellent representations.]

To the Editor of the Virginia Evangelical and Literary Magazine.

I hasten to correct a misapprehension, of the meaning of my correspondent, an extract from whose letter appeared in the seventh number of your Magazine. It was intended that, after this sentence, "your article respecting the persecutions at Geneva is not exact," a chasm in the extract should be marked, by which it would have appeared that the reference of what follows was entirely different. If the chasm had been filled up, it would have expressed an erroneous opinion of the writer respecting the source from which the information in question was derived. He was far from imputing the error to any per-

son concerned in the management of the Magazine. Wishing to avoid an unpleasant specification, I thought that his meaning might be inferred from the sentence respecting "the Socinians of Geneva" and "those who embrace the cause of the Gospel." Having stated it as his belief that the persons who complained of being persecuted at Geneva, had attracted to themselves no small part of these persecutions by the imprudent and improper manner in which they had advocated the truth, he says that the Socinians of Geneva are inexcusable; but implies at the same time the fact, that the cause of the Gospel had been defended there "with the arms of the world." The inaccuracy then, of which he complains, consists in an unfair division of the censure. I have all confidence in the impartiality of his dispositions. He is far enough from approving the maxims and habits of the school of Geneva. And I am well persuaded that his sympathies are with the sincere friends of evangelical truth, in all their afflictions and in all their triumphs. K. K.

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For the Virginia Evangelical and Literary Magazine.

NOTICES FROM FRANCE.

After the restoration of the Bourbons to the throne of France, many persons entertained the opinion that their dispositions were unfavourable to the Protestant cause. This impression gained ground on the public mind after the second restoration, which succeeded the short reign of Napoleon. And additional countenance seemed to be given to it, by the persecutions of Nismes and elsewhere which were tardily arrested by public authority. A work is announced by M. Lauze de Peret, Advocate at Nismes, who proposes to give a historical summary of the troubles in the department of the Gard. He has selected an appropriate motto, not only for his work, but for his prospectus—*Incedo per ignes*.—He disclaims however the severe and rigorous character of the historian. Remarking that a memoir of recent facts could not without assuming a character of hostility, imitate the liberty which the historian may use, he professes it to

be his great object to exhibit facts in such a way as to heal past alienations. The work will consist of two volumes of 400 or 500 pages each. It will not be exposed to sale but furnished to subscribers.

Motives of policy, or justice, or real good will, are leading the French government to the adoption of a system, more favourable to the peace and welfare of the Reformed churches. In support of this opinion the two following facts are mentioned in the Archives of Christianity.

Some members of the Reformed church of Puy-laurens were condemned to pay a fine for not exhibiting the customary hangings before their houses on the day of *Fete-Dieu* or Corpus Christi, in honor of the ceremonies of the Roman Catholic church. A reclamation was addressed by the Consistory of Castres and seconded by that of Paris to the minister, secretary of state for the interior, who answered that the demand of the Consistories appeared reasonable and that henceforth the Protestants will be exempted from personal compliances of that sort. All that will be required of them, is to permit the administration to make for them those preparations on this subject, with which, the time has not yet arrived to dispense. Important as this immunity appears to those who enjoy it, it is secured to them by no general law: it is nevertheless sanctioned by a decision of the court of *Cassation*.

It has been customary for indigent Protestants to receive assistance from persons in their own religious community. These charities were often administered in secret and with fear. The man who wished to employ some of his property to this object with a view of its usefulness, after his death, could not do so without violating the law and hazarding the forfeiture of the funds which he wished to assure to a purpose so benevolent.—At present the law empowers the Consistories to receive and to administer whatever legacies are left to the poor of their churches: and many liberal persons have be-

queathed considerable sums for their support. K. K.

ECCLESIASTICAL STATISTICS.

The Church in South Carolina.

The following is as nearly as we can ascertain the number of ordained ministers in South Carolina—

German Lutheran 6, Congregational 7, Episcopal 22, Presbyterian 49, Methodists 100, Baptists 109.

The number of churches of each denomination, may be estimated with tolerable correctness, as follows:

Congregational 9, German Lutheran 18, Episcopalian 18, Presbyterian 98, Baptist 170, Methodist 300.

Seceders and Roman Catholics, are not included in the above estimate, the number of whose ministers or churches we have no means at present of ascertaining.

Of Communicants in the above churches the following is the best estimate that can be made out, and is probably not very remote from the actual fact.

German Lutheran 600, Episcopal 1200, Congregational 1500, Presbyterian 10,500, Baptist 14000, Methodist 16000. A considerable proportion in most of these denominations are coloured persons. [*S. Evan Int.*]

The Synod of Virginia comprises four Presbyteries.

1. The Presbytery of Hanover; which consists of sixteen members, and have under their care twenty five congregations, nine licentiates, and three candidates.

The names of the ministers and of the congregations served by them are as follows. Revd. Moses Hoge, D. D. President of H. Sidney College; James Mitchell, Peaks; James Turner, colleague with Mr. Mitchell; John D. Blair, Richmond and Hanover; Matthew Lyle, Briery and Buffalo; James Robinson, Cove and Rockfish; John H. Rice, Richmond; Clement Read, Cub-creek; Benjamin H. Rice, Petersburg; Joseph D. Logan, Byrd and Providence; William S. Reid, Lynchburg; John D. Paxton, Norfolk; John McLean, Concord and Hat-creek. Alexander M. Cowan, Bluestone;

John N. Campbell, without pastoral charge; John Kirkpatrick, Cumberland. *Licentiates*, Abner W. Kilpatrick, Walter S. Pharr, Joseph E. Curtis, James Wharey, Francis Thornton, jr. Thomas Caldwell, John Silliman, James B. Stafford, and Robert N. Anderson.

2. The Presbytery of Lexington; which consists of seventeen members, and have under their care thirty congregations. Names &c. as follows.

Rev. William Wilson, without pastoral charge; Samuel Houston, Falling Spring; William Calhoun, Staunton and Brown's Meeting house; Robert H. Chapman D. D. Bethel; Geo. A. Baxter D. D. Lexington and New Monmouth; Robert Logan, without pastoral charge; Conrad Speece, jr. Augusta church; John McElhaney, Lewisburg and Union; John Henderson, Mossy Creek and Union in Augusta; Andrew B. Davidson —; James Morrison, New Providence; John C. Ewin, Lebanon and Windy cove; Robert H. Anderson —; Jas. C. Willson, Tinkling Spring and Waynesborough; Samuel McNutt, New Dublin; Daniel Baker, Harrisonburg and New Election; Henry Ruffner, —.

3. The Presbytery of Winchester;

which consists of thirteen members, and have under their care fifteen congregations, two licentiates and two candidates.

Rev. William Hill D. D. Winchester; William Williamson, Middleburgh; Joseph Glass, —; John Matthews, Shepherdstown and Charlestown; John Mines, Leesburg; Samuel B. Wilson, Fredericksburg; Andrew A. Shannon, —; James Black, Mount Bethel; John B. Hoge, Tuscarora and Falling Water; Samuel D. Hoge, Bethesda; Wells Andrews, Alexandria; William N. Scott, —; William C. Walton, Hopewell; *Licentiates*, James H. C. Leach, Joseph Smith.

4. The Presbytery of Abingdon; which consists of seven ministers, and have under their care twelve congregations, and four candidates.

Rev. Samuel Doak —; Edward Crawford, —; Stephen Bovell, D. D. —; John Doak, —; Samuel W. Doak, Mount Bethel and Providence; James Gallagher, Rogersville and New Providence; Alexander McEwen Glade Springs and Rock Springs.

Hence it appears that there are in the Synod of Virginia, 53 ministers, and eighty two congregations.—That there are now nine licentiates, and nine candidates for the ministry.

NOTICES.

The Presbytery of Hanover is to meet on the 15th of Octr at Walker's church in Albemarle; and the Synod of Virginia, at Winchester, on the 21st of the same month

We have heard of some reliques of that great and good man Samuel Davies, now in possession of one of his grandsons; through whose kindness we hope shortly to see them. It is this that has induced us to postpone the conclusion of our memoir for the present.

To a *Subscriber and Friend*, who has so earnestly called on us for a discussion of the *scriptural doctrine of Ordination*, we say that if he wishes to know why any deny the validity of *Presbyterial Ordination*, he had better apply to them; they ought to be prepared to show why they unchurch so many of those who believe in and

love the Lord Jesus Christ: but if he wishes to know the reasons and authority for this ordination, we would refer him to Anderson's Defence of Presbyterians, Boyse's Account of Ancient Episcopacy, Miller's Letters, The Christian's Magazine, and Davies's Sermons, vol. iii. pp. 340—385, 8vo. edition.—This we hope will be received as a satisfactory answer to his urgent call. If not, we observe farther that we do not wish to be brought into controversy with our brethren on this or any other subject. Yet should the Magazine be supported next year, we shall give an account of the tenets and peculiarities of the several religious societies in our country, in their own words, thus affording information to all without offence to any.