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ART. I.—*Sketches of Residence and Travels in Brazil, embracing historical and geographical notices of the Empire and its several provinces.* By Daniel P. Kidder. In two volumes—with illustrations. Philadelphia: Sorin & Ball. London: Wiley & Putnam. 1845. 2 vols. post 8vo.

WHILE we show great avidity for information concerning regions in the old world, we are often ignorant of countries in our own hemisphere. How few of our readers could, on examination, give any intelligent view of the great empire of Brazil! We can answer for ourselves, that the work now on our table has communicated as much that is new and awakening, as any similar volumes we ever opened. Hitherto our sources have been few and imperfect: this is the first work exclusively on Brazil, which has proceeded from the American press. Even the English volumes on the subject are not recent; nor is there any one, the writer of which personally visited more than two or three of the eighteen provinces. Southey's quartos are very much confined to great libraries, and seldom perused; and the continuation by Armitage is still less known.

The very works to which we should naturally turn for information are full of errors. Mr. Kidder has shown this in regard to two of these; and we follow his strictures. In McCulloch's Universal Gazetteer, the blunders are such

ART. III.—*Theopnusty*. By S. R. L. Gaussen, Professor of Theology at Geneva. New York: John S. Taylor.

THOUGH God is not the father of truth, it being as eternal and necessary as Himself, still His mouth is the only oracle, and His mind is its perfect guage. Pretended truth, not gotten in some way from Him, is no truth; but gotten in any way from Him, it stands good, past all possibility of mistake or wrong, and is imperative at once upon His creatures. The opinions, therefore, that divide mankind, all defer to the question, what would God have us believe? and conflict between them, however wide the interest it involves, and however keen the interest it excites, has no colour of excuse for lasting beyond the time when it shall have been shown, either that no truth has come from God on the subject in dispute, or precisely what truth has come from Him. So that the grand end in studying any question is, to bring the mind of God, whether by reason, which is His voice, or by nature, which is His work, or by the Bible, which is His word, in contact with our own minds.

By whichever of the three, however, this contact may be formed, it is of prime importance to settle the office of reason, for it has work to do, no matter how God may open Himself to man.

This work has been obscured and thrown into doubt by a favourite mutiny of reason—a desertion of its proper office and a usurpation of another. Its proper office is to stand and weigh evidence for the truth, and to give sanction to faith as soon as that evidence reaches a sufficient height. Its mutiny has been in insisting that it shall see through a truth as well as see its evidence, in intruding its own power to understand into the list of necessary proofs, and so in refusing to believe what it cannot comprehend. Or, a little differently, for error has never only a single phase, it is a withholding of belief from every thing that reason cannot argue out from common principles. How grossly it is bred of prejudice may be seen in the fact that it is not for a moment tolerated any where else than in religion. Natural science does not wait to record her acquisitions till she has robbed them of all mystery. Reason does not comprehend the union of soul and body; yet believes it. Reason cannot argue out the attraction of the earth and sun from any principle not gathered from the fact itself. Indeed the only principle that seems to touch the

case, "nothing can act where it is not," seems all against it; yet reason submissively believes. Let it get within the circle of religious truth however, and its tone changes. Men's feelings, then, are with it in its errors. We like it to doubt and cavil. The trinity we do not believe, and the incarnation we do not believe, and miracles we do not believe, because reason, not acting as she always does, but instructed by our prejudices, revolts at the method by which they are reached and at the mystery in which they are wrapped. This error of the mind has gotten the name of Rationalism.

Winning a pretext from it, but still for an interested end, i. e., to shield false doctrine from the scrutiny of reason another school of religionists have passed over to the opposite extreme, and held, that in all questions of faith, reason must be silent, for that "where faith begins reason ends."

This is no escape from Rationalism, except as from one folly into a worse. The curse of Rationalism lies not in the use of reason in religion, nor even in the too great use of reason, a thing impossible, as much so as for an eye to gaze at a distant object too keenly to see it, or for a judge to look into a cause too closely to decide it. It lies in a total misdirection of reason. The man who denies the force of gravity, because he cannot understand it, is not bowing to reason, but making reason bow to prejudice. Let him reason farther, and his faith will return to him. So of the Rationalist. He does not reason enough, or else not well enough; for in admitting evidence for mysteries he would stand on a far higher level even of intellect, than in suffering his faith to go no farther than his sight. Indeed his principle carried out would strip us of all knowledge; for where is the truth that does not trace its root deeper than our eye can follow it? Simply then because what is Rationalistic is not rational, does it brand it itself as error.

Let it be remembered that reason in common and popular discourse denotes that power by which we distinguish truth from falsehood and right from wrong,* or striking out the last words, inasmuch as wrong and right are but different modes of truth, that power by which we distinguish truth from falsehood. Now who dare say, that contact may be formed between the divine mind and ours, and truth pass from one into the other, without the use of

* Stewart's Philosophy, Vol. II. p. 10.

this power? Must we not “know of the doctrine whether it be of God?”* God’s being the oracle cannot discharge reason from being the judge; for let any one attempt to conceive, how thought of any kind could get into his soul without passing the tribunal of reason. It may be received superstitiously on the sole authority of the church, or reverently on the sole authority of God, but authority itself in either case offers itself as a reason. So that, to say nothing of our duty to “prove all things and hold fast that which is good,” there is a mental necessity upon us. Faith cannot be so implicit, or authority so supreme, as neither to give, or be, or seem a reason for itself. The fact is, credulity is never so servile as to cast from it all private judgment. It may degrade the judgment of reason, but cannot resign it; for dismiss reason from its office, and man has nothing more to do with truth, nor actively with God.

* Under no circumstances of divine communication does reason seem to have less to do than where truth is imprinted on the mind by direct inspiration. Then there seems to be nothing needed, but to listen,—“I will hear what God the Lord will speak.” Better reflection, however, will convince us that reason has an office here, much the same as in any other mode of learning. First of all it is cast upon us to judge whether God is speaking. All truth that enters the mind is not inspired truth. We must “try the spirits whether they are of God.”† Then close upon this follows another work, of telling the meaning of what he speaks. If the inspiration has been one of words alone as was probably the case with Balaam, then the prophet has the same labour with his hearers to decypher and explain. If it has been an imprinting of the thought itself, as it was perhaps with holier men than Balaam, still a sanctified reason must again come in to unfold and connect and apply the thought.

Inspiration, however, is rare. Only one mortal among millions has enjoyed it, and he for the benefit of the rest. To us truth out of the mind of God must come at second hand, through those few favoured men, and though God guides them in receiving it, and makes them infallible in delivering it to us, still we get it not in the shape it came to them. Poor forms of matter, when most refined, but a rough way of conveying thought, are the only media of communion between man and man, and therefore the only

* John vii. 17.

† John iv. 1.

way which inspired men have had to hand down their oracles to us.

Obscured, divided, and broken up as truth necessarily must be in descending from God's mind into no better vehicle than dull material signs, language as we call them, it may readily be imagined how greatly the labour of reason must be enhanced when it descends from the simple work of receiving an inspiration from the mind of God, to the less honourable but more complex work of interpreting it from out of the lips, or from under the pen of man. This last is our work. Thought which going forth from its infinite source, has poured itself into rude signs, we must gather back and identify and store away for our spiritual uses. Our creed, in this age of the world must be got by reading; and reading must necessarily task all the faculties of the mind. It implies at each step a judgment of evidence and of meaning; and what other power have we for this than the sanctified power of reason?

The doctrine that sways all private judgment to the authority of the church, and that would withdraw the written word from the people, would not, should we grant it, vitiate our conclusion. Some one must read. If not the people for themselves; then the Church for the people: and the minds that make up "the Church," no matter who they are, if we trust them to get for us the sense of scripture, must get it by interpretation, and by that only conceivable mode of right interpretation—the exercise of an enlightened and divinely directed reason in the work of judging.

This is no easy work. Preparation for it came by our earliest and longest studies; and though the Bible, now that education has furnished us with a knowledge of its grammatical signs, seems to give up its meaning to us with little trouble, yet how much it still withholds! The Bible still grows with all of us in size and riches by the careful sifting of its language. It admits and rewards all degrees of toil and exactness; and he must rest content to starve his faith with but half a revelation who does not put all his powers under task for interpretation. Those translations of the sacred text in which so many make it an act of piety to confide, at the very time when they would depose reason from any office in religion and even ridicule its claims, are the fruits of long years of closest and most various exercise of reason. The fact is, call reasoning Ration-

alism, and brand it as an evil, and the Bible is at once shut up and sealed. Make trust in the mind's decision heresy, and you shut up the only faith to trust in God; you have set your name to the most thorough skepticism. That corrupt reason breeds error infallibly, calls not that it be renounced, but that it be renewed; not at all that we seek some other avenue to truth; there is no other; but that we call down the Spirit to open and widen and straighten that which God Himself has appointed.

These remarks will bring the mind of the reader to the right point for introducing the principle above alluded to.

The mere recognition of grammatical signs, is not the whole of reading. Were language an exact picture of thought, then the will of God would suffer nothing in clearness and fulness from being committed to such a medium, but could be gathered by an act of mind as near to simple apprehension as the act by which ancient prophets saw what "the spirit within them did signify." Absolute precision, however, is no attribute of language. Signs, whatever their mode are essentially ambiguous. The shades of thought are so much finer, and more endlessly varied than the modes of matter that one can never find a true impression in the other.

This is most true, of course, of the ruder signs—forms of motion, or, as we call them, gestures; a method of making matter the utterer of mind, the vagueness of which is extreme. If the principle we are about to notice, did not furnish us a key, it would be a mystery how men impart to them or see in them, so much significancy. Still, though in these lower modes the obscurity is greatest, we do not wholly get out of it in reaching the very highest level of artificial refinement, and in adopting signs most narrow in meaning and best defined. Language, though by far the most transparent medium of thought, of which we have any conception is thoroughly ambiguous. Not only so, but in a thousand cases, read as it stands, each word in its strictest definition, it is worse than ambiguous, false. It is the necessary habit of writers, trusting to a principle, distinct from mere grammar, for finding this sense, to compose sentences whose natural downright meaning, is palpably untrue. The Bible is full of such sentences. Nay, we know not that it would be going too far to say, that if nothing could come in as a basis of hermeneutics but bald definition, scarcely any part of scripture but would be so far ambiguous as to teach less truth than error.

Let some remarkable instances illustrate what is meant. The tenth commandment is, "Thou shalt not covet." Take these words as they stand in their simple sense, and they bring discord into the whole moral law. The mad faith of the Stoic might be built upon them, or any system absurd enough to forbid the exercise of one of man's inborn and necessary emotions; but true religion would contradict them at every point. Desire, (and the same word in the original has elsewhere this translation) the strongest desire is a Christian duty and a grace of the Holy Spirit. "Covet earnestly the best gifts." There can be no love of God without it. It is plain there must be some clue in the mind of the plain unlettered reader to a sense much narrower than the word self-interpreted would justify.

So with another of the decalogue: "Thou shalt not kill." Definition alone is not all that must interpret it. Appeal to nothing else, and you would have a precept that would meet well enough the conscience of a Brahmin, but would contradict the duty no less than the practice of every Christian.

"It repented the Lord that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him at His heart."* Shall we take this as it stands; just as our dictionaries would define it? Could there be better evidence that in reading, the mind is called to an office beyond mere telling the common force of words, and the current use of sentences; and must be furnished beforehand with some governing principle on the strength of which it may feel authorized to depart from that force and use? We have quoted marked instances to make the truth more prominent, but deeper examination of any written book would show it to be general; inasmuch as all language, in its strictness, either falls short of the shade of thought committed to it, or else wanders from it.

Revelation, then, is worth nothing to us without the aid of what we shall call, THE PRINCIPLE OF DESIGN. The humblest reader of the Bible uses it; if unwittingly, still, of course, and constantly.

As we have seen, the only end of the reader is, to bring himself in contact with the mind of the writer—to discover his will, or his intention in the language he has chosen. We assume the hypothesis, that that intention harmonizes in all its parts. Especially in reading the Bible, each leaf

* Gen. vi.: 6.

is turned with faith in the oneness of its Author's will. This harmonized will is his design.

Now what was it in respect to the passages just quoted, that convinced us they would not bear the strict meaning of their own words? Plainly, previous knowledge, on our part, of what God would have us believe. The sense was at once swayed to its proper bearing, by the discord any other would occasion with the truth already in the mind. The manifest design changed and fixed the sense.

So it must in each step of interpretation. The words alone do not give the meaning to us, but the words corrected and modified by light from other quarters. Our former knowledge must digest our new acquisitions; just as the food of the body can be assimilated to it only by the warmth and strength of its previous nourishment.

To brand this as "philosophy and vain deceit," is idle. There is a deep and radical necessity in such a course. It is not a license; it is not a privilege; it is the very life and soul of reading, in its simplest forms—that which each mind adapts at once, without choice or doubt. The Bible was never meant to work its ends without it. It would have been no more impossible for Galileo to read the sentence, "Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon,"* in its directed sense, or, *ex animo*, to recant before it on the charge of vain philosophy, than for the least sophisticated reader to go counter to his own sense of design in reading the plainest scriptures.

That principle is much the same to which, in the legal profession, there is such constant appeal, and in neglect of which such endless injustice has been done: we mean intention, a principle not safely or even sanely lost sight of in any kind of writing; for, indeed, insanity could hardly bring together such strange and incoherent thoughts as any book would present without it. As examples, take Matt. vi. 16.; ii. 5.; ix. 3; x. 12. All figurative passages are more or less in point.

What would naked grammatical interpretation do for such sentences as these? "If any man come to me and hate not his father and mother and wife and children and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple."† "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot

* Josh. x. 12.

† Luke xiv. 14.

sin, because he is born of God.”* “Pray without ceasing.”† “It pleaseth God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.”‡ Let any reader ask himself what such sentences would be worth to him as forms of truth, if he were forbidden to task his already acquired store of kindred truth to render them intelligible. Let him go deeper, and by watching his own mind in all reading, and the poverty and waywardness of language in all writing, see if he can read at all, without shaping and limiting and enlarging the ideas that words offered to him. The line of the intended thought, and the line of simple definition often and widely diverge, but seldom strictly coincide.

The fact is, we have spoken of natural grammatical interpretation, but the idea is a mere figment. Language was never given for such self-limitation. The principle of design is essentially a part of grammar; for until it can be shown that without a miracle words can point with perfect singleness of indication to one shade of meaning, this principle must determine our choice between many shades. Call grammar that which gives the intention and rules of language, and we read grammatically only when we feel free to depart, as occasion asks it, from the common sense of words.

How on any other principle are we to give faith to the exact verbal contradictions of the Bible? “Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like unto him. Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit.”§ Compare also (Rom. iii. 28., and iv. 2.), “A man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.” “If Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory;” with (James ii. 21, 24), “Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac,” &c. “Ye see then, how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.” And yet these passages, in strict letter so opposite, are, in the intention of their writers, simply and beautifully consistent, a little previous knowledge brought to the reading of them being enough to bring the utmost logical harmony out of the utmost verbal discord.

Again, what clue but that of which we are speaking, can help to fix in their proper places the various means by which men are said to be saved, so as not to contradict the

* 1 John. iii. 9. † 1 Thess. v. 17. ‡ 1 Cor. i. 21. § Prov. xxvi. 45.

fact of one salvation. "There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we can be saved."* "If by any means I (Paul) might save some of them."† "In doing this, thou shalt save thyself."‡ "Baptism doth now save us,"§ &c. "We are saved by hope."§ "Receive the engrafted word which is able to save your souls."¶ It is cast upon the mind in each case to shape the meaning, that the unity of God's saving work may not be broken.

Our Lord's discourses are somewhat remarkable for the degree in which he takes for granted in those who listen to this prompt perception of design. "Joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance."*** "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth; I came not to send peace but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father,"†† &c. "Take no thought for your life,"‡‡ &c. "The maid is not dead,"§§ &c. He questions the people as to its possession. "What think ye of Christ? How doth David in spirit call Him Lord?" &c. He rebukes them for the want of it. "O ye of little faith; why reason ye among yourselves because ye have brought no bread?" "How is it that ye do not understand, that I spake not to you concerning bread?" &c.

His disciples, too, and other inspired writers, have left on record hundreds of such mistakes in which we see the mischief of losing sight of the principle of design, and by which therefore that principle is set in the clearest and most striking light. We beg the reader to notice, as we mention some of them, how uniformly the persons who make the mistake, fail to get hold of the design by carnal, external views of what the writer or speaker means—in one word, by a tendency to literalism—that wide and general form of literalism, which is the offspring of a mind devoted to externals.

From what source but this, came that interpretation of the scribes, which made all the Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah point to an earthly king, who, in a long personal reign should restore the kingdom to Jerusalem? "We trusted that it had been he, which should have redeemed Israel."§§

* Acts iv. 12.

† Romans ii. 14.

‡ 1 Tim. iv. 16.

§ 1 Peter iii. 21.

§ Rom. viii. 24.

¶ James i. 21.

*** Luke xv. 7.

†† Matt. x. 34.

‡‡ Matt. vi. 25.

§§ Matt. ix. 24.

§§ Luke xxiv. 21.

By taking narrower cases, they may be multiplied to almost any extent. "If thou knowest the gift of God, thou wouldst have asked (of me) living water. Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep," &c.* "I have meat to eat that ye know not of. Hath any man brought him ought to eat?"† It is wonderful how these mistakes, in every way so unique, cluster together in some chapters. "Whither I go ye cannot come. Will he kill himself? The truth shall make you free. We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man; how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? Ye do that which ye have seen with your father. Abraham is our father. If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death. Now we know that thou hast a devil. Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead; and the prophets? &c. Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it and was glad. Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Before Abraham was, I am. Then took they up stones,"‡ &c. Could there be more signal proof of the emptiness of mere words to minds unfurnished with the key to their design?

A similar train of misconceptions occur in John vi., in many points more interesting to us, because, notwithstanding Christ's repeated explanations,—“It is the Spirit that quickeneth the flesh profiteth nothing,”—the very same misconceptions are persevered in till the present day. The reader will mark that the error is still literalism—a refusal to see a figure, where the speaker meant one. “The bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. Lord, evermore give us this bread. I am the bread of life. The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven. Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph? &c. He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. The Jews, therefore, strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat? Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. This is an hard saying, who can hear it. It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh

* John iv. 10, 11.

† John iv. 32, 33.

‡ John viii.

profiteth nothing ; the words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit, and they are life." The whole (and it should be read together, for many of the tokens of a spiritual meaning which Christ held out to render the mistake of his hearers inexcusable, are seen in the sentences we have omitted ;) may stand as a type of the many superstitious interpretations to which the words of Christ and his apostles are still subjected, helping carnal men to exalt the externals of the church at the expense of what is spiritual.

Let us be satisfied now, however, with this inference from other quotations. There is a partial knowledge of design which is an essential element of reading. Each sentence, as it stands by itself, presupposes in the mind of its reader light to define its meaning, which the bare language does not in all cases furnish.

Strong objection, we know, will at once array itself. The principle in question is open to the most dangerous abuse. Give up reliance on the self-defining power of language, and let each man's reason set its limit, and what unity or safety will be left in revelation? Where is the office of grammar, what is the end of words, where is the good of scripture, if nothing precise or definite is given to the mind?

The difficulty might be met by casting upon those who urge it, the responsibility of its solution. Our argument was from experience, supporting itself at each point on fact—the fact that men actually do, and that involuntarily, call in to their help in reading, more than mere definition of words. First explain away the fact, and then you have a right to the objection. Look into any commentary, or hear any plain Christian expound the scripture, and tell us why appeal is so often made to "what makes good sense," or "what would be consistent for the inspired man to say," or "what would meet his purpose." We stand on the safest of all grounds, fact and necessity.

Waiving this right however : does not the weight of the difficulty bear only upon the extravagant use of design. While the argument had in view the folly of trusting in mere grammar to the neglect of design ; does not the objection meet only the opposite extreme—trust to a knowledge of design to the neglect of grammar? The fact is in arguing this whole question men have falsified both sides of it by choosing either of two equally wrong positions. The so called philosophical method of interpretation and the

grammatical method have been held up as essentially distinct, and as able, either, as chosen, to stand alone. There never was a greater misconception. There never was a more sure result than the fastening of error on both antagonist parties. The philosophical method is well enough as the name of the extreme on that side, and the grammatical method of the extreme there ; but no amount of practical error can divorce them wholly. Each must include the elements of either, however wrongfully one may predominate. The true method moreover lies between them, and is true only in proportion as it blends both in harmony.

You say, this license as to design will destroy all certainty of language. But have we not seen (in case of the Jews) the license of language destroy all justness of design? There must be some accommodation between the two; and it lies in this: We have no right to depart from a common or possible usage of words. There is our limit on that side. Language is certain up to that degree of precision which its known usage gives it. If its usage could in the nature of things be single, as was said early in this paper, no consideration of design would be needed. But to meet its ambiguities and its shaded and varied meanings, direct and metonymical, exact and exaggerated, literal and figurative, something else is loudly called for; and the principle of design, if it but restrict itself to the limit of this variety, makes interpretation actually more sure and safe. One is a check upon the other. Language limits the design; this defines the language.

It is time, however, now to ask whence this previous acquaintance with design, is gathered; for it must be got legitimately, or we have no right to use it. What has been pronounced a real, necessary and instructive act of the mind in reading, must be only a perversion and a prejudice, unless it traces itself back to a foothold in the truth. The moment, too, it does trace itself back, it becomes available orally to defend, as it was mentally to discover the meaning of the passage, in the reading of which it has been enlisted, it becoming possible, as it does with all instructive acts of the mind, to dissect and set it down step by step in writing, and then to use it, as we wish to do hereafter, as a link in logical argument.

Now for that general acquaintance with design with which we come to the reading of a text in scripture, three

sources may be given. The list might be lengthened. Experience and testimony, might be added to it; indeed, any source of certain knowledge. 1. The intuitive truths of the mind. 2. Other scripture. 3. Deductions from other scripture.

1. As to the intuitive truths of the mind, no fear need be had of giving in to the idea that they sway the sense in reading, however cautious men ought to be in doing homage to the human mind by setting it as judge over revelation. For to intuitive truths everything must bow. It is on intuitive truth that all faith in a Bible, or even in God's being is pillared. The mind's intuition is the first and highest voice of God to man; so that it is but a light honour to put upon it to say that it helps men to honour God's design in sentences of scripture, when all scripture and all faith must in the nature of things acknowledge it as their last appeal.

If a text should appear in the Bible in letter commanding us to blaspheme God, the intuitive principle would just as promptly revolt against a literal meaning, and force the mind to recognise some other design, as it would revolt against the Deists' renunciation of a Bible altogether, or the Atheists denial of a God. So when a text does appear saying, that, "the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger,"* or that "God hardened Pharaoh's heart"† or, that "this cup is the New Testament in my blood,"‡ the same inward voice cries out against the blasphemous or absurd rendering in either sentence, and turns the mind in search after another. Some previous acquaintance with design, then, is had by intuition.

2. Much more is had by scripture previously read. A clear revelation on any page, the mind at once seizes as a standard for every other. These standards multiply and gather in the mind as we read on, that we cannot be reading long without forming something like a system in our minds, God's harmonized will as it has appeared to us, and this goes with us in after reading, a test, as it grows of all additions to itself.

3 This would be quite enough to meet the ambiguities of language, if they were its only imperfection. But language lacks in fulness, as well as in precision. The Bible reveals all truth that it is necessary for us to know, virtually, but

* Isaiah xiii. 9.

† Exodus x. 20.

‡ Luke xxii. 20.

not verbally. Thought is a plane; language touches its surface only at scattered points; and all the intermediate spaces, where it fails in contact, the mind must supply. The world itself could not contain the books that should be written if every shade of necessary truth were formally expressed in revelation. The lack of this is no evil, if the mind be set to the work for which God made it: by legitimate deduction to fill up the chasms of scripture. Revelation, in effect, includes all doctrines, that by sound reasoning are drawn from it; they were in the mind of God when He gave the parent truth from which they are deduced. The exact thought of revelation is but the frame work of our faith—the seeds of things intended for growth and increase in the soil of the mind.

If this be not so, why do men resort to homilies and expositions to fill out and enlarge upon the word? Let its letter be enough, if study can gain from it no additional instruction. It is unquestionably, a perfect rule of faith, but only so, when viewed in that office for which it was given, as a guide and basis of evidence to intelligent and reasoning minds. God meant it to bring into act every faculty of the soul, in weighing, discriminating, enlarging, balancing, in all intellectual exercise by which one truth sinks into another.

As illustration we quote again, “Thou shalt not kill.” It is not a little remarkable what varied action of the mind this little text requires.

First, other scripture occurs to narrow down its meaning. It cannot be God’s design to say, clear of all reserve,—“Thou shalt not kill,” or else he would not have enjoined animal sacrifices upon Abel, or have granted animal food to Noah. Nor, imagining human life to be alone referred to, could it yet be his design to say positively, “Thou shalt not kill;” for cases of sanctioned war* and the law of capital punishment† prove the contrary.

Then when direct scripture, has gone so far, fair deduction must go still farther. A thousand minor cases require settlement. When may life be sacrificed for great national ends? When, in the various instances that may occur, may one life go for the rescue of many? How far may life be jeopardized, and for what ends? We meet all such questions virtually by appeal to scripture, yet not to the letter of

* Joshua viii. 1.

† Genesis ix. 6.

scripture, but to the design ; and the task, to gather this, is thrown upon the judgment of the reader.

But now still another step : the command is one of the decalogue, and must have its wide and spiritual meaning ; for it has its place to fill in that moral law which is exceeding broad. Here opens an illimitable field on which the bare command, "Thou shalt do no murder," is but the starting point. All the language ever spoken cannot cover it, we mean specifically and in every minute application. The mind taking with it such examples of interpretation as that in Matt. v. 22, where Christ brings causeless anger under this commandment, must by just inference fill out the spiritual sense, letting this command like the rest of the ten grow wide and long before its eye till together they embody the whole of morals, engrossing in their comprehensiveness, that all engrossing law—the Law of Love.

Thus our view is finished of that system of ways and means, by which God's mind is opened to his creatures. Now the whole meets a beautiful analogy in nature. God's mind is the sun of the spiritual world. Man's mind is the eye, without which the light is wasted. It has no where else to impress itself. Man's reason is the judge to discriminate the shape and colour of what is seen and to divide between the light and the darkness ; misused, if it judge farther than its judgment lies, as much so as if an eye should labour to discern the centre instead of the surface of surrounding objects, or refuse to own them to be there unless it could see through them ; but totally abused, if it imagine that it has not some judgment on every truth that the mind receives, as certainly as sensation has on every shade or shape that the eye takes in. Language is the medium that conveys the light, dark in itself, bright only as the carrier of those transmitted rays. But where is the analogy for what we have claimed in design.

Philosophers tell us that if the diffusion of light depended solely upon the direct rays of the sun, every thing would be in darkness, that did not stand in those rays. The sun would have to shine immediately upon an object to render it visible at all, and even then we could see it only on its illuminated side. That light which is now poured over all nature, which penetrates the forest, which bathes the mountain, which goes down into the cavern, which visits us in our houses, awakening us before the sun and cheering us after its going down, all diffused light, would vanish. Day

and night would be alike anywhere but under direct solar power.

What principle is that, beyond direct illumination, that orders the system as it is? Reflection. One subject, when illuminated, lights up the rest. The air, the clouds, the earth throw back the rays and scatter them, and thus fill the spaces which otherwise they could not reach. A thousand objects that have never seen the sun borrow his light from those right under his beams.

The analogy could scarcely be more complete. Reflection does not create light. It only scatters it. It makes one illumination do the work of many; carrying the ray shed on one point, and diffusing it over a thousand others. Mark too, it not only extends, but corrects our vision. Objects, of which, without it, but one side would be revealed, and which hence, in many positions, would send us a distorted outline, horned or cusped, this would unfold in their true form and colouring, giving us the advantage in our judgment of their perspective and their shade.

But we hasten on from mere illustration to reach again a point of absorbing interest, which from the first has been kept anxiously in view. Is there not danger in this whole matter? Can any man be safe in the use of such a key to revelation.

We need not hesitate. Certainly there is the utmost danger. So long as the human mind is not only fallible, but prone to falsehood, how could we dream of safety in its judgments. Nay, give it up to itself, and we might be sure that it would judge wrong, nor gather one spiritual truth from the whole of revelation.*

But then, while this is sober fact, it is wild argument. Each step in thought that the unconverted mind takes is perilous; shall it take none? All uses of the mind in inquiry after God are fraught with danger; are they therefore false or vain uses? The fact is the objection lies as much against the whole of reading as against this part of it. Mind must be appealed too; if not for design, then for grammar itself. Who knows not how words are warped and changed under the pretence of strict philosophy; how the dearest articles of our faith are taken from us sentence by sentence, under the sanction of alleged usage? Germany, where the varieties of language have been most

* 1 Corinthians ii. 14.

deeply studied, is witness enough, that if danger must condemn, then all interpretation must be given up.

Even inspiration asks for mind, and therefore, argues danger. Those visions of Balaam, the sceptre rising out of Israel and the star out of Jacob, did not so write their truth on the heart of the seer that he could not pervert them. Is, therefore, the use or worth of inspiration nothing? Prove that man can deal with truth, without help from mind, or prove that apostate mind can walk in any path to truth, and be infallible, or else confess that danger alone proves nothing in the matter.

But let us not dismiss this fact. There is danger. The position which it cannot overthrow, it may favour and confirm. Set over against it another fact, for which we have appealed to consciousness and accumulated proof, that no man can read a sentence without the help of preconceived notions of design, be they true or false, and we have, first of all, the explanation of a noted problem in religion. How is so brief a book as the Bible made to speak so many languages, in becoming the basis as it has of so manifold, nay and opposite systems of belief? The truth is notorious that all forms of obliquity in faith or morals profess their own warrant in this single volume, a truth pointing plainly on the one hand to the slenderness of the self-limiting power of language, and on the other, to the potency of that mental instinct, if we may call it so, which brings the preconceived ideas of the mind to mingle in the work of reading. A scrupulous man, possessed with a corresponding notion of God's design, opens the book only to find the spirit of his own bondage copied there. "Resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also"* "Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn thou not away."† - The Universalist strengthens himself there in his doctrine. "Who (God) will have all men to be saved," &c. "Who gave himself a ransom for all," &c.‡ "Not willing that any should perish," &c.§ So the Perfectionist: "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; he cannot sin, because he is born of God."|| "Be ye, therefore, perfect as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."¶ And the Antinomian: "Now we are delivered

* Matt. v. 39.

† Matt. v. 42.

‡ 1 Tim. ii. 4, 6.

§ 2 Peter iii. 9.

|| 1 John iii. 9.

¶ Matt. v. 48.

from the law,"* &c. And lastly the superstitious man, pleading for all literal senses and exalting everything external. "This is my body, which is broken for you."† "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."‡

Now, it will not do to say, the very fault is, that these preconceived notions should be allowed any voice; so it is, if you refer to their error, but by no means, if you refer to the whole fact of preconception. It is necessary—they will enter; if not falsely coloured, they would be vital to the discovery of truth. If an eye be jaundiced, the way to provide against false judgments is to cure it, not to put it out. Then here; until you prove that you can digest fresh truth with no help from what has been taken into the mind before, that empty of everything but the mere machinery of words, you are fit for the work of reading—that thought asks nothing from former thought, but increases wisdom by accumulation and not by growth, you must rest contented in making safe and sure, what you cannot abandon.

Can it be made sure? Certainly: just as any other act of the mind. How can it be made sure? To the extent of speculative soundness, just as any other act of the mind may be made so—by a sound and wise preconception, resting on a sober previous study of the truth. It is the "unlearned and unstable that wrest the scriptures to their own destruction."§ To the extent of spiritual soundness, however, and a saving apprehension of the truth, and, indeed, we may say, to the point of entire safety, either speculatively or spiritually, it can be made sure only by the special guidance of the Holy Ghost. For "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God,"§ &c.

The analogy of faith, as framed in the mind of an unconverted man, is valuable in proportion as it is rationally well considered; but, since it can be only an intellectual system, it must fail to introduce him to any saving truth, and may shape itself in the grossest speculative error. What can make us sure? A sense of design framed under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

To establish this Principle of Design as a test in controversy, is that for which this article has been written. We need it specially in studying the nature of the

* Romans vii. 6.
‡ 2 Pet. iii. 16.

† 1 Cor. xi. 24.

‡ John iii. 5.
§ 1 Cor. ii. 14.

visible church. Who is not tired of hearing controversy on this head turning endlessly on one or two narrow ambiguous scriptures, which God never meant as our chief light in shaping the order of His church, which may be proved to be susceptible of debate indefinitely, and therefore, over which men may battle till the end of time, and still read them each in their own tongue wherein they were born. A patterning after nature, by a simple watching of the instincts, or native impulses of the mind, would totally cure men of such waste discussion. How does the mind in its earliest and most unbiassed movement, meet such a text as this, "I have said, ye are gods."* Not by long inward contention over the words themselves, but by instantly and briefly referring them back, for limitation, to the general truth, there are no more Gods than one. So of the church and all externals. We cannot help framing ourselves wide gospel principles in regard to them, and on them the mind instinctively falls back when any language jars with them. "This is my body," for example. It is artificial and opposed to nature for the mind to debate over mere grammar, in a case like this, when it has once appeared, that it can mean something else than its baldest, briefest sense. That moment the mere verbal controversy has pronounced itself interminable, and the mind is longing to cast herself back upon broader principles, and the grander and better witnessed doctrine of the gospel, thereby to digest and decide the passage. This is nature—the instinct of the mind, and as with all natural instinct, it is logical and true. The mind fresh and not yet touched by prejudice, will follow it; and we have but to observe our minds, and copy their working, to get upon our paper the briefest and strongest mode of settling Bible questions, the most certain to convince, because the mind intuitively resorts to it to convince herself, and the least open to a challenge, because appealing back at once out of the reach of lesser and more entangled questions to the broad and high ground of the gospel. The fact is, we talk about it as wise to bring out orally and in writing, that method to which the mind secretly and of herself resorts; but it is more than wise. It is necessary and universal. Most arguments virtually use it. And only because it is not more distinctly recognized and stated, does it so seldom do what,

* Ps. lxxxii. 6.

in many a private mind it has often done, *i. e.*, seal and settle controversy.

Our only choice is, whether to use it unwittingly and with but half effect, for even in canvassing one verse, we must use it—or to give it such depth and prominence, that we may mould whole arguments upon it.

Wm. Dodge.

ART. IV.—*The General Assembly.*

THE General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church met in the city of Cincinnati, Ohio, May 15th, 1845, and was opened with a sermon, by the Rev. Dr. Junkin, moderator of the last Assembly, from John viii. 33—"The truth shall make you free." The Rev. John M. Krebs, of New York, was elected moderator; the Rev. M. B. Hope, of Philadelphia, temporary clerk; and Dr. Krebs having resigned his office as permanent clerk, the Rev. Robert Davidson, of New Brunswick, was elected in his place.

The house proceeded to appoint a place for the next meeting of the Assembly. Philadelphia, Cincinnati, Charleston and Alleghany city were nominated. The roll was called, and Philadelphia received 122 votes, Alleghany 33, Charleston 20, Cincinnati 1. The next place of meeting, therefore, will be at Philadelphia, in the tenth Presbyterian church.

The several boards of the church made their annual reports, the first being

The Report of the Board of Education.

This is the twenty-fifth year of the existence of the board. In 1831, one of the members said, the society was dead, and the Philadelphia brethren might bury it; but since then they have raised \$400,000, and educated 1500 students. The number of candidates during the past year has been 11; of these there have been in their Theological course, 137; in their Collegiate course, 162; Academical course, 68, under the immediate care of Presbyteries, and the stages of their studies unknown, 13; teaching to procure funds, 13. Of these 4 have died during the year; 1 has been dropped for not reporting; 3 have withdrawn on account of ill health; 11 have gone into other means of support,