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ART. I.—*A Practical View of Regeneration.*

*Archibald Alexander*

THAT human nature has lost that moral purity and perfection with which it was originally endued, is a truth which lies at the foundation of the Christian religion. Indeed, we see not how it can be denied by the deist, without casting a gross reflection on the character of God. It is only from the Scriptures, however, that we learn the origin of evil. Here we read, that God made man upright, but he hath sought out many inventions. Man being in honour continued not. When God created man he formed him in his own image and after his own likeness; and what that image consisted in, the apostle Paul informs us, when he speaks of the new creation. "And that ye be renewed in the spirit of your mind. And that ye put on the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." The phrase "after God," means after the image of God. This is expressed in the parallel passage, "Seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge *after the image* of him that created him." By the fall this moral image was effaced. The mind which had been illumined by divine truth became spiritually blind; the heart whose exercises had been holy

ART. V.—*The Library of Christian Knowledge.* Edited by the Rev. Herman Hooker, A. M. Author of “*The Portion of the Soul.*”

*Subian Alexander*

FOUR volumes of this series have appeared, and if we may consider these as a specimen of the work we congratulate the Christian public on the prospect of being supplied from time to time, with a rich feast of evangelical matter, calculated to give nourishment and refreshment to the spiritual life of believers.

M'Laurin's *Essays* is not a recent work, but the lapse of years can never destroy its value. While the observations of the author are strictly orthodox, they are philosophical, and if read with candour and attention, must have a powerful effect in correcting mistakes and expelling prejudices where they have been imbibed, and in enlightening the mind, and invigorating the faith of the sincere Christian. We would strongly recommend the perusal and re-perusal of these essays to the young theologian. Too great a proportion of time, we fear, is spent by the young ministers of our day in light reading, which while it gratifies a prurient curiosity has no tendency to strengthen the mind. The effect produced is superficial knowledge, and a distaste for deep and solid research. Religious people are now distinguished for bustling activity and a show of benevolence and zeal, but there exists a sad deficiency of profound and systematic knowledge even in those who have enjoyed the advantages of a liberal education.

The second of these volumes, “*Goode's Better Covenant,*” is a late production, and is the work of a very sound evangelical minister of the established church of England. Both the doctrines and the spirit of the author forcibly remind us of the writings of the doctors of this church in the days of queen Elizabeth, when Calvinism was so far from being a discredit to the minister who held it, that no other doctrine was tolerated in the church; and Calvin's *Institutes* was the text-book from which candidates for the ministry in the church derived their theology, and his commentaries, the grand treasury to which they had continual recourse. This volume cannot be read by the pious without sensible profit. It breathes the very spirit of ardent piety, and directs continually to CHRIST, as the only source of strength and growth

in grace. The kind of faith here inculcated, is not a cold rational assent to general propositions, but a cordial, living principle of action, the exercise of which is commonly accompanied with a sweet persuasion of pardon and acceptance. Nothing animates and encourages the pious soul in its spiritual pilgrimage so much, as the smiles of the great Captain of salvation. Assurance of the divine favour, though not the essence, may be said to be the life and comfort of faith. Too great a prevalence of a legal, self-righteous spirit, is certainly one of the greatest hinderances to the vigour and consolations of piety. It is truly delightful to see a return, in a large number of the ministers of the established church of England, to the true doctrines of her excellent Articles, and to the evangelical faith which so eminently characterized her primitive members. Whatever may become of her alliance with the state, a church which has in her bosom hundreds of such ministers as Mr. Goode, cannot be in danger of being overthrown.

We are pleased to find that Mr. Hooker is disposed to devote himself to the work of preparing useful works for the American press. We do not know any way by which a judicious and pious man can render himself more useful, and we hope that no circumstance will arise to discourage him in this good work.

*Letters Practical and Consolatory, designed to illustrate the Nature and Tendency of the Gospel.* By the Rev. David Russell, D. D. author of "A survey of the Old and New Covenants;" "A View of the Adamie and Mediatorial Dispensations." With an Introductory Essay, by the Rev. Henry A. Boardman, Philadelphia.

We are much gratified that the theological writings of the Rev. Doctor Russell of Dundee, begin to attract the attention of American readers. The editor could not easily have hit upon a work better adapted to instruct and comfort the pious reader, than these small volumes of letters. They are, we think, the best productions of the gifted author's pen. They appear to have been written in the course of a real correspondence, which gives them a greater freedom of style than could easily be attained in letters originally intended for the press. Though the letters are practical, and particularly suited to afford rich consolation to the children of sorrow, they are nevertheless eminently instructive. There are few books from which a clearer idea can be obtained of the doctrines of the Christian system than from these Letters.

They contain, as do his other writings, the pure gospel of Jesus Christ. The peculiar excellency of these volumes is, that you have the truth exhibited, not in a controversial or even a systematic form, but in its practical bearings, both as a guide to faith and practice. The style is clear, concise, and easy; and possesses a vivacity which keeps up the interest of the reader. Some idea of the subjects of some of the letters. The first is "On the sufferings of Christ;" a delightful and edifying discourse, which cannot be perused without a salutary effect. The second is "On the Glory of Christ;" which possesses excellence similar to the first. The third is "On the Invitations and Promises of the Gospel." This is a very important letter, in which the true nature of gospel invitations and gospel promises is clearly exhibited, and the common mistakes of serious persons corrected. The fourth letter is "On the Law and Gospel." The view here given is purely evangelical. He insists that the law should be clearly and pointedly preached to convince men of their sin and danger, and to drive them from their false refuges and self-righteousness. But while he would have the law so wielded as to wound the soul and slay its false hopes, he directs that the gospel be constantly preached in its fulness and freeness, and sinners invited and urged to come at once without delay to the outstretched arms of mercy. Faith he represents as the vital principle of practical religion, and teaches that our persons must be accepted, before we can hope for the acceptance of our services; and that obedience is yielded, not to obtain forgiveness, but as an expression of gratitude for having obtained it. The fifth is "On Christian Comfort." The sixth, "On the Practical Influence of the Truth." And the seventh, "On Sanctification." The subjects treated in the remaining part of the first volume are, "The Perseverance of Christians—The Divine Purposes as exhibited in Scripture—The Benefit of Affliction," &c. &c.

The letters composing the second volume are not less important nor less interesting than those in the first. Much of the volume is occupied with the consideration of the important subject of a sinner's justification before God; and of faith as the medium or instrument of justification. The views of the author on this momentous subject are clear and evangelical. They are worthy of the purest ages of Christian theology, and yet in style and manner they are well adapted to the present age. We could scarcely direct our readers to any book from which they would gain more satis-



faction in relation to the true gospel-ground of a sinner's pardon, acceptance, and peace with God. And these letters are the more valuable, because in many of the popular treatises on practical religion recently published, the subject of a sinner's justification before God is either entirely omitted, or presented in a light so obscure or erroneous, that the serious inquirer is much more likely to be misled, than guided in the path of life. The true nature and office of a justifying faith is also here exhibited in a just and satisfying manner.

Besides the letters which relate to faith and justification, which occupy a considerable part of this volume, there are others of a highly interesting and consolatory nature. The sixteenth and seventeenth, "On the best method of instructing inquirers," contain precisely such advice as should be given to all who are seriously seeking the salvation of their souls. They direct the sinner to look at once to a crucified Christ. They carefully guard him against trusting, in any degree, to his own duties; and yet he is urged to the use of appointed means. The common errors and mistakes under which awakened souls often labour are clearly pointed out, and the richness and freeness of the grace of the gospel are exhibited in a very pleasing manner.

The concluding letters of this volume will be found of the same excellence as the preceding. The subjects are "On the maintenance of Christian confidence," which is an admirable letter; "On the Lord's Supper," which is judicious and affectionate. The last two letters, "On the Contemplation of the Heavenly Temple," and "The Heavenly Sabbath," bring this delightful and instructive volume to a suitable close. If our recommendation could have the desired effect, it should make a part of every family library in the country. It is in our opinion a book eminently calculated to promote correct doctrinal views, and at the same time, advance the cause of practical religion. And we think that if the American Tract Society would consent to add the whole of these letters, or a selection from them, to their family library, its value would be not a little increased.

We cannot dismiss this subject without expressing our gratification upon the perusal of the sensible and judicious preliminary Discourse prefixed to these Letters by the Rev. Mr. Boardman, of Philadelphia. When we contemplate the influence of the press on public sentiment, and how much is published which has a tendency to corrupt the public mind,

we feel disposed to hail every fellow-labourer, who by education and talents is qualified to write in an instructive manner: and as writing is an art in which men commonly improve in some ratio to their practice, we rejoice to find a young man disposed to come forward as a coadjutor in the propagation and defence of evangelical truth. We know that Mr. Boardman's sentiments are sound, and as he has rapidly risen to eminence as a preacher, we are of opinion that he is capable of rendering effective service to the church by his pen. If his bodily health should for a while disqualify him for the labours of the pulpit, we hope that he will feel the obligation of making use of the press for the benefit of the church and the world.

#### POPULAR INFIDELITY.

Since we began to write our notice of the above-mentioned volumes, we have received the fifth volume of the series; an entirely original work from the pen of the editor. This volume has the impress of deep thought and great spirituality. Mr. Hooker is undoubtedly a writer of no small degree of originality, and his style is often very beautiful; but there is a refinement and obscurity in his composition, which we fear will prevent his book from being read and duly appreciated by that class of persons for whose improvement it was especially intended. The great defect, we think, is the want of prominent points in the work. There is no doubt a real thread of connexion between the several parts, but it will scarcely be perceptible to superficial readers. The sentiments throughout appear to be correct and evangelical, and we should be pleased to furnish to our readers some specimens of what we consider excellent writing, but the want of room forbids us to make extracts. As Mr. Hooker is a young author, we would recommend it to him to endeavour to bring his excellent matter before the public in a more pointed and palpable form; to seize with a strong grasp the more important points and bearings of his subject, even if it should be at the sacrifice of those minor beauties with which his style abounds.

While we are pleased to observe the zeal and diligence which have led Mr. Hooker to compose a volume of this size, we are not altogether satisfied respecting the judiciousness of the resolution to insert in this series a new, and consequently unknown work. We think before a volume is admitted into "The Library of Christian Knowledge," it should

have passed with full approbation the ordeal of criticism, so as by common consent, to be admitted to a place among the standard works of evangelical piety.

It is our sincere wish that Mr. Hooker and his publisher may receive such encouragement in conducting this useful enterprise, that they may go on to furnish the reading public with a large number of valuable standard works in every department of Christian knowledge, which are now not accessible to them, or only obtained with difficulty. We know not any way in which more good can be accomplished than by the publication and circulation of religious books. And while we approve of publishing such volumes in a series, so as to make up a library, we think it important that each volume should be sold separately also.

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ART. VI.—*The Life of Augustine.*

*J. A. Alexander*

AURELIUS AUGUSTINUS, called in English, Austin or Augustine, was born at Tageste in Numidia, Nov. 13, 354. This place was not far from Hippo, but at so great a distance from the sea, that he never saw it until he was grown up. His parents were not rich, but lived in affluence. His father Patricius was an idolater, and of a choleric temper; but his mother Monica was a Christian, and distinguished for meekness and humility; by the example of which her husband was at length won over to the faith, and was baptized shortly before his death. Their son, even in his early youth, fell into a gulf of iniquity, of which he has in his "confessions" given a lively description, in order to confess and deplore his blindness and ingratitude to God; and to set forth the infinite riches of sovereign grace; and to stand as a warning and example to those who should come after him. He was not baptized in infancy, because the opinion was then entertained, that the stain of sins committed after the reception of this sacrament could not be readily washed out. When a boy, however, he was once very sick, and his mother got every thing ready for his baptism; but he suddenly grew better, and the ceremony was deferred. This practice of deferring baptism he afterwards freely condemned.

His father perceiving that his son had a remarkable appetite for learning, spared no pains in his education. But he