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No. I.

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- ART. I.—1. *The History of the Puritans, or Protestant Nonconformists; from the Reformation in 1517, to the Revolution in 1698; comprising an account of their principles; their attempts for a further Reformation in the church; their sufferings; and the Lives and Characters of their most considerable Divines.* By Daniel Neal, M. A., reprinted from the text of Dr. Toulmin's edition: with his life of the author and account of his writings. Revised, corrected, and enlarged, with additional notes by John O. Choules, M. A. With nine portraits on steel. 2 vols. 8vo. pp. 534 & pp. 564. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1843.
2. *The Prose Works of John Milton; with an Introductory Review.* By Robert Fletcher. London: William Ball. 1838. One Vol. 8vo. pp. 963.

NONE who watch closely the current of popular opinion, can have failed to remark that the sneer so long conveyed in the popular phrase, "the Reign of the Saints," has already become nearly pointless, and, if they be of like sympathies with ourselves, to have anticipated the time when, like the similar inscription on the cross, it shall come everywhere to stand for a simple expression of

cressets, each like a sun, yet all but a dim glimmer of light, in that vast sea of fire whose sulphurous waves burned, not with light, but darkness; instead of battles and tournaments, the slaughter at Fontarabia and the knightly flower of Trebisond and Aspramont, we have the fallen chivalry of heaven,

———God-like shapes, and forms
Excelling human;

the kingly phantom, the shapeless terror that with the snaky sorceress, his mother, guarded the infernal doors, the youthful angels that under Uriel kept watch over the imparadised lovers, and the embattled Seraphim, that mingled in Titanic warfare on the plains of heaven.

One of the most striking characteristics of Milton was his perfect and equal development in all directions. As a man of letters, a public servant, and private citizen, he was a model on which manhood might shape itself. His greatness did not lie in the exercise of a special power, but in the power to be all that was great. In the highest station he would have been superior to his fortunes, and in the lowest, would have given dignity to the station. If there is any virtuous deed not recorded of him, he still seems to us to have done it; if any great thing not attempted by him, he still seems to have been equal to it. He is the only man who ever eclipsed his own fame by a higher and brighter noon; who after winning an immortality for his youth, gave it back to oblivion by the achievements of his age. If Milton had not been the author of *Paradise Lost*, he would be better known as a lyrical and dramatic poet. If he had not been a poet, he would still have had whatever fame belongs to the first political writer of his age. If he had been neither poet nor politician, he would yet have held no contemptible rank as a theological writer and historian. And if he had written nothing at all, we should not have lacked in the story of the times, some account of one John Milton, a devout and worthy person, and a man of singular boldness in the good old cause.

Geo. W. Alford

ART. II.—*Religion in America; or an account of the Origin, Progress, Relation to the State, and Present Condition of the Evangelical Churches in the United*

States. With notices of the Unevangelical Denominations. By Robert Baird, author of "L'Union de l'Eglise avec l'Etat dans la Nouvelle Angleterre." New York: Harper & Brothers. 1844. 8vo. pp. 343.

THE subject of this work calls to it the attention of the religious patriot, and the eurrency which it is likely to have in Europe should eause us to examine with care into the faithfulness of its representations. The origin of the labour may be briefly stated. Being inquired of, in regard to our country and its religious institutions, by the late Duehess de Broglie, the author prepared a small book on the Origin and Progress of Unitarianism in the United States, of which the title is appended to his name, as given at the head of our article. The effect of this treatise was to stimulate inquiry, and he acceded to the request of some distinguished friends on the Continent, to furnish the information which is now presented in this volume. The work was written at Geneva.

In its British form the publication is more elegant and costly. The cheap edition before us is however sightly and suffieient. As the author observes, it bears marks on every page of having been composed with a view to European readers. From this peculiarity, we doubt not, many have overlooked it, as supposing themselves fully acquainted with their own institutions. Yet, after a careful examination, we think that there is no American however well informed who may not read it with instruction, and refer to it as a syllabus of important facts, not elsewhere extant in connexion. However we may know the state of things at home, we gain new views of their relations, when we compare them with kindred things abroad; and this volume derives value from a perpetual tacit comparison of this sort, inseparable from its plan and destination. Again, it is undeniable, that the members of each Christian denomination, in America, live in some degree apart, look at their respective cantons, and are ignorant of what other religious bodies are doing; except on those unhappy occasions when controversy brings them face to face. In such a work as this, there is every thing to profit persons whose views have been thus contraeted. And we admit with pleasure that many of the statistical representations here made, have interested, instructed, and even astonished us.

All these remarks presuppose fulness and accuracy in the account rendered. Without pledging ourselves for the

absolute correctness of a figure in the book, we have read it with a conviction that it answers these conditions. Dr. Baird is both capable and trustworthy, We are glad the enterprise has fallen into his hands. How different would have been the result, if such a review of our whole religious field had been laboriously made by a partisan or a fanatic. In this view of the matter, we are not sorry that the author has maintained a temperate impartiality, which to some, on various sides, may savour of indifferentism. It is the very point of view which it was incumbent on him to assume, in order at once to escape the charge of sectarian bias, and to gain access to the European mind. And the result is a book which may serve as the expositor of the American Christian, be he Episcopalian, Methodist, Lutheran or Calvinist. At the same time, the truth is fairly told with regard to those sects, which, in the very title, are classed as *unevangelical*, to wit, Papists, Socinians, Jews, Universalists, and the like.

In the Preface, Dr. Baird expressly disavows all intention to construct a theory in regard to the organization of the Church, or its relation to the State; and declares it as his sole object to give a faithful delineation of facts. Accordingly he has produced a plain, comprehensive, elaborate and useful historical treatise; such as will be of service to every intelligent American, who would refer to a convenient epitome; such as nothing short of arduous, self-denying labour could have effected; and such as fills a niche in our literature altogether unoccupied. For the minute accuracy of every statement, we do not vouch; not from distrust of the author's care or fidelity, but simply because the verification of his details would demand a toil equal to his own. But our estimate both of the justice and the value of his memoirs has increased as we have gone on in the examination; and we respect his charity and moderation, as well as his diligence. While the work is not professedly or characteristically apologetic, it is fitted in a high degree to vindicate our country and its religious institutions from the misrepresentations and calumnies of those who envy them in the old world; and having obtained a circulation in Europe such as no American book on the same subject has had, or is likely to have, it ought, even by those who may quarrel with some of its contents, to be regarded as a tribute to our national reputation. We desire to say, in as marked a manner as we can, that such efforts should not be disregarded by our people. The unexampled assaults upon our good

name, which increase with every year, are plainly due to the unexampled development of power and wealth in our national progress. Whether this transatlantic hate will ever embody itself in the form of open war against the free principles which are the origin of all our progress, is yet unrevealed. If it do not, it will be from no lack of determined hostility. And if pacification once ensue, in regard to the antagonist creeds of the two hemispheres, it will be effected by the commerce of good offices, under the banner of Christianity. Every thing therefore which tends to display to Europe the genuineness and extent of religion among us; to exhibit the identity of grace here and there; or to clear us of the charges of fraud, violence, irreligion, oppression, and anarchy, is just so much towards this desirable consummation. The author early showed his zeal in this work, by his letter to Lord Brougham, on the subject of slavery; and in the volume before us he has manifested no feeling more constantly or in higher degree, than that of intense patriotism; a patriotism increased, we are sure, by his extraordinary opportunities of knowing the people and the courts of the old nations. And we heartily adopt the judgment of the Reverend Doctors Welsh, Cunningham and Buchanan, though perhaps with very different examples in our thoughts, when they say: "We do not agree in all the opinions which the esteemed author has expressed; but we admire the judicious, benevolent, candid and catholic spirit by which the work is pervaded."

It is very far from our intention to give the analysis of a work, the merit of which lies in its condensation. The plan is easy and natural. It is divided into eight books, which are subdivided, rather beyond necessity, so as to make in all one hundred and thirty chapters. The first three books, being not quite a third of the volume, treat of our national history. Over these we pass lightly. They are obviously intended for European readers, and convey information which many of these readers will get in no other shape.

The part which discusses the *Voluntary Principle* in America, is not only the longest and most elaborate, but the most important portion; being that which will beyond all others give the work its value in the eyes of those for whom it was principally composed. It is a discussion which fills the earlier portion of the volume, and reappears occasionally in all that follows. The thirteenth chapter of the First Book is of much interest, as showing con-

clusively, that the opinion common in Europe, respecting the origin of the voluntary method in America, is unfounded; and that almost every plantation on our shores was at first, and for a long period, an acting out of the opposite principle. The people of the ancient kingdoms need to be taught that our forefathers brought with them the old-world notions; and that the prevailing mode of supporting religion was the fruit of wise delay. In another place, Book iii. c. 2, the same matter is discussed with equal ability, and the views there opened will be new even to many among ourselves. Such will read with surprise that the "Old Colony and Dominion of Virginia," (to use the style of the ancient writs) was the foremost to dissolve the tie of Church and State; and that it was the power of evangelical truth, accompanying the books of Luther, Flavel and Boston, and the preaching of Robinson and Davies, which occasioned the change completed by the act of December 6th, 1776. They will further be instructed in facts essential to our argument against foreign opponents, that Voluntaryism was not the unavoidable vice of our colonial state; but that the yoke of State lay heavily on our necks, until the era of freedom; that it was broken and cast off, knowingly, deliberately, and joyfully, by solemn acts of legislation, in New York, South Carolina, and all the colonies where hierarchy existed; and that its force was most stubborn, and longest endured, in the Puritan State of Massachusetts. The same hidden but unconquerable energies which by God's ordinance worked in the mass and broke out into political resistance and independence, burst forth in the rending of the church bonds. The two things go together, not merely in cabinet-hypotheses, but in historical events. According to our author, or rather according to Dr. Hawks, more than two-thirds of the Episcopal clergy in Virginia were opposed to the Revolution, and most of these returned to England. And we believe we may safely say, that the comparison of ancient and modern Virginia, with an Establishment, and without it, affords one of the most striking examples in church-history, of the deadening influence of one system and the quickening power of the other. For on the very ground where the mass of the stipendiary rectors were unworthy of the sacred office, there is now a body of clergy, who for diligence, piety, and repugnance to Oxford ritualism, stand unequalled among Episcopalians.

We are obliged to Dr. Baird for bringing into prominent relief the early labours of Robert Hunt, the first who ever preached the gospel in English on the shores of this continent. The facts connected with this ministry go a certain length in freeing the Virginian emigration from the charge of absolute heathenism. We would that they had enjoyed a purer and more cordial Christianity; but let us not deny that their enterprise was sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

It would be strange indeed if we were not somewhat gratified with the paragraph which we subjoin, respecting our own little State.

“After about twelve years of embarrassment, commencing with the Revolution of 1688 in England, the Proprietaries of both East and West New Jersey surrendered “their pretended right of government” to the British Crown, and in 1702, both provinces united into one, were placed for a time under the Governor of New York, retaining, however, their own Legislature. The population, notwithstanding the difficulties and irritation caused by political disputes intimately affecting their interests, steadily increased. Taken as a whole, few parts of America have been colonized by a people more decidedly religious in principle, or more intelligent and virtuous; and such, in the main, are their descendants at the present day. Nowhere in the United States have the churches been supplied with a more faithful or an abler ministry. New Jersey was the scene of the excellent David Brainerd’s labours among the Indians, during the latter years of his short but useful life. There, too, laboured the celebrated William Tennent, and those other faithful servants of God in whose society Whitefield found so much enjoyment, and whose ministrations were so much blessed. There, and particularly in the eastern section of the province, many have been witnesses of those outpourings of the Holy Spirit, which we shall have occasion in another place to speak of. And, lastly, in New Jersey was planted the fourth, in point of date, of the American colleges, commonly called Nassau Hall, but more properly the College of New Jersey. That college has had for its presidents some of the greatest divines that have ever lived in America, Dickinson, Burr, the elder Edwards, Finley, Witherspoon, Smith, Green, &c., and it is still as flourishing as ever, although a sister institution has arisen at New Brunswick, to co-operate in diffusing blessings throughout the State. I may add, that no State in the American Union has more decidedly proved the importance of having a good original population, nor has any state done more, in proportion to its population and resources, to sustain the honour and promote the best interests of the American nation.” p. 67.

Justice is done, in this historical part, to the happy influence derived from the Presbyterian emigration to this country. It is a point which will justly attract increasing attention, as the spirit of our people is aroused by the

counter-influence of ten thousands of Papists. In another connexion, Dr. Baird would, no doubt, take pleasure in recurring to the excellencies of a race from which he derives his own lineage, we mean that of Presbyterian Scotland. In this comprehensive title we reckon all the Irish Protestants; for they are of Scotch blood, and when driven by the persecuting hand of prelacy from their native seats, retained in its freshness the doctrine, and what we consider quite as important, the domestic discipline of their fathers. Wherever they are found in America they approve themselves worthy descendants of reformers and martyrs. Not from them are drawn the devotees, who fill the tents of Miller or the temple of Mormon. They are Calvinists, not merely in the sense of believing unconditional election, which seems to be the sole criterion with many who bear the name, and who with the doctrine of sovereignty, go over to Arminius or Pelagius, in respect to grace; but in the sense also that they believe, maintain and live on those cheering, purifying doctrines of the old reformation, which make Christ the sum and substance of the scriptures; which represent his imputed righteousness as the sole ground of acceptance; and which, now as of old, are stigmatized as Antinomian by the framers of new species of conversion and new conditions of pardon. Under all the stiffness, one-sidedness, narrowness, and in some circumstances, downright bigotry of Scotch and Irish Presbyterianism we are constrained to say that it affords the best material for a church structure which is known in our land. Other materials may be more ductile, but none are more permanent. And we have no hesitation in declaring that the alleged improvements in theological definition which have been known as 'American theology,' are so far from adding a step of progress to the work of the Reformers, that they have merely backslidden to the ground occupied by the latitudinarian schemers of the sixteenth century. This we can say, in perfect consistency with our admiration of the noble Nonconformists who planted the New England churches, and our prompt recognition of acuteness, versatility, enterprise and accomplishment in their descendants; who, nevertheless, have, as we believe, departed, in a direction entirely towards error, from the line of theology marked out by the earlier race. Without the restless activity of the New England mind, our country would never have made its great advances in commerce, manufactures, and diffusive

beneficence. But the very boldness, which is life to those things that demand motion, may be death to those which ask repose; and the speculative zeal which engenders invention and upholds industry, may propel the soul into hazardous mutations in the things which God has fixed. If the conservative element is demanded any where in the universe, it is demanded where positive revelation has defined the landmarks. And for this restraining force, we look to the tenets and especially to the mode of training, which characterized the old Presbyterians. These remarks ascribe due honour to those whom we are nevertheless bound to examine, before we follow their guidance in religious affairs.

The evils resulting from the union of Church and State are set in a clear light in this work. There is no country in the world where the double experiment of religion with and without an establishment, has been so fully made as in the United States: and Dr. Baird has made good use of the results. It is the very lesson which needs to be inculcated on our brethren abroad, who are singularly inattentive to the true history of the case; and who, from sometimes seeing godliness in close connexion with State patronage, and ungodliness opposed to it, are too ready to take coincidence for causality, and to regard our more thorough trial of the two methods, as a base submission to one of them from ignorance or necessity. Scotland, to which we look with peculiar regard, as the country which has been most thoroughly leavened with the gospel, and in which, as we believe, the greatest revival of religion since the Reformation is this moment in progress, is also the country where the just apprehension of this subject is most likely to produce great effects. The measure of true principles embodied in the proceedings of the Free Church, and the issue which we think inevitable in the very direction which that Church now pursues, are precisely what the more enlightened Dissenters, and all American Christians have contended for. Most gladly therefore would we forget the intemperate censures, and the wresting of facts, in regard to America, which were called forth in profusion, while the Voluntary question was agitated. Bonds are already drawn between the two bodies, always united as to gospel truth and order, which promise to hold them in indissoluble harmony. No foreign survey of American affairs, so far as our knowledge goes, bears any comparison, for comity and justice, with the

recent article in the North British Review. For such good offices, our whole Christian community should be thankful; and while we have a natural complacency in the good-will of these honoured brethren, we shall be all the readier to accept the 'excellent oil' of their rebuke.

To such minds, we do not wonder that the work before us was welcome. To others, in less enlightened portions of European Christendom, it will be equally useful. It will show them, not by abstract reasoning alone, but, by a copious induction of all the facts in the case, what the exact operation of the Voluntary principle is. It will set before them, in a palpable and undeniable exhibition, such startling truths as these; that under this method, funds are raised for church building, for the support of pastors, and extending the same blessings to destitute places; that organized and efficient agencies are founded, for the prevention of intemperance, sabbath-breaking, pauperism, and oppression; and that, considering the age of the country, it may compare with any other in respect to its charitable and philanthropic institutions.

Dr. Baird's fifth book treats of the Church and the Pulpit in America. Under this head, several important questions are discussed, concerning the nature of church-discipline, a term which has no corresponding reality, under the Anglican establishment; concerning admission to sealing ordinances, in regard to which such laxity has prevailed in foreign churches; and concerning the kind of preaching which may be considered characteristic of the United States. The following statement deserves to be extracted:

"Among the American preachers whose visits are still remembered with interest in Great Britain (and some of them on the Continent also), but who are no longer with us, may be mentioned the Rev. Drs. Mason, Romeyn, Bruen, Henry, Hobart, Emory, Fisk, and Clark, who were certainly no mean men. Of those who have visited Europe within the last few years, and who are still permitted to prosecute their work among us, the Rev. Drs. Spring, Humphrey, Cox, M'Auley, Codman, Sprague, Breckinridge, Patton, and Rev. Mr. Kirk, of the Presbyterian and Congregational Churches; the Rev. Drs. Bethune and Ferris, of the Reformed Dutch; the Rev. Drs. Milnor, M'Ilvaine (bishop of Ohio), Meade (bishop of Virginia), Hawks, and Tyng, of the Episcopal; the Rev. Drs. Olin, Capers, President Durbin, and Bishop Soule, of the Methodist; the Rev. Drs. Wayland, Stowe, Sears, and M'Murray, of the Baptist; and the Rev. Dr. Kurtz and the Rev. Mr. Riley of the Lutheran and German Reformed Churches, are widely known in Great Britain, and some of them on the Continent. The last-named two were kindly received in Germany, and heard with attention, both when they spoke of the infant seminaries for

which they pleaded, as well as when they proclaimed "that Name which is above every name," and which is "like ointment poured forth." p. 190.

To this we may add, that the Rev. Dr. Kurtz, above named, one of the few native Americans who ever preached in Germany, in the language of the country, was followed by thousands of hearers, so as to require a military guard to keep order; that many expected to see, in the 'American preacher,' a black man or an Indian; and that one of his discourses was printed and well received, in the land of his forefathers, by evangelical persons. The statements of the author, respecting written and unwritten sermons, are just, so far as the fact is concerned: we are not so sure that he does not go further than is just, when he says that unwritten sermons "can hardly have the same order, clearness, and freedom from repetition," as those which are written. All the vices of *extempore* preaching are exhibited at times by those who write. The use of the pen does not necessitate method, perspicuity or conciseness. Nor does the simple absence of writing produce carelessness or prolixity. We have, on a former occasion, expressed our judgment of those who would prescribe either as the unalterable method. We now suggest, in addition, that no man need doubt the advantages of the more free delivery of truth, who is familiar with the labours of Hall, Fuller, Spencer and Jay, in England; or with those of Mason, Wilson, and Rice, in our own churches. A man may write, as well as preach, *extempore*; and we condemn the method, if it imply utterance of unpremeditated thoughts: no man can conscientiously rise in the pulpit and speak *quicquid in buccam venerit*. Nor do we believe, that the American churches have ever heard more scriptural instruction, more logical argument, or more ornate diction, than from some of the departed worthies, who spake without a line of manuscript. The practice of reading sermons is going more and more out of use in the Free Church of Scotland. It never was in use, among the Reformed churches of the continent. It is considered less binding, than formerly, even in New England. It is not prevalent among the British Dissenters. Even Episcopalians, in both countries, under the warming influence of gospel zeal, forsake their paper. And this will cause little surprise to such as are familiar with the history of the British Pulpit. While some in England have argued against it as an innovation, the following mandate of Charles II. to the University of Cambridge suffices for a reply.

“VICE CHANCELLOR AND GENTLEMEN,

“Whereas his Majesty is informed, that the practice of reading sermons is generally taken up by the preachers before the University, and therefore continues even before himself; his Majesty hath commanded me to signify to you his pleasure, that the said practice which took its beginning from the disorders of the late times, be wholly laid aside; and that the said preachers deliver their sermons, both in Latin and English, by memory, without book; as being a way of preaching which his Majesty judgeth most agreeable to the use of foreign churches, *to the custom of the University heretofore*, and to the nature of that holy exercise. And that his Majesty's command in these premises may be duly regarded and observed, his further pleasure is, that the names of all such ecclesiastical persons as shall continue the present supine and slothful way of preaching, be from time to time, signified to me, by the Vice Chancellor for the time being, on pain of his Majesty's displeasure.*

MONMOUTH.

“Oct. 8, 1674.”

We have no reverence indeed for Charles the Second, in matters of religion, and should be unwilling to see such an injunction emanating from any authority. We remember the names of Edwards and Davies and Smith and Chalmers. But we claim equal liberty for those who, after due preparation, choose to exercise their gifts after that way, which is not deemed unfavourable either to logic or rhetoric, in the great performances of a Chatham, a Burke, a Marshall, a Hayne, a Calhoun, and a Clay. These remarks, though occasioned by a passing observation of Dr. Baird, are not intended to represent him as proscribing a mode of public address which, we have reason to believe, he often employs himself.

The *matter* of American preaching is far more important. The author, on this topic, does justice to our national pulpit. We have sometimes doubted, however, whether unnecessary pains were not taken to predicate of American sermonizing a type altogether its own; and whether equal excellence, in respect to all the alleged peculiarities, were not easily to be found in all the evangelical preaching of the non-conformist and Scottish divines. Our preachers, it may be said, are *simple*: we wish we could say as much of certain metaphysical teachers who are not rare. Our preachers are *earnest*: so were Bunyan, Flavel, Livingstone, Andrew Gray, and Willison. They dwell on *immediate reconciliation with God*; so did all who ever preached the law and the gospel with converting power,

* See Statute Book of the University of Cambridge, p. 301. Car. II. Rex.

from Luther down to McCheyne. They are *highly doctrinal*; but not more so than Calvin, Owen, Charnock, the Erskines, and Boston. They are *systematic*; so were the fathers of our evangelical churches, perhaps to a fault, dwelling oftener and longer on theological topics in their order, and on scriptural books in their connexion, than most in America have been wont to do. They are *philosophical*; on which we confess judgment. They are *direct*; but not more so than Baxter, Alleine, Whitefield, and Hill. They are *faithful* and *practical*; these are the attributes of all preaching, where the gospel rules in the mind and heart. American pastors, and we tell it with thankfulness, have in numerous instances combined all the good traits of this enumeration. But we may err by claiming an excellency too exclusive, for what we love. There may be qualities which predominate in minds of another class, and which we might borrow with advantage. Understanding Dr. Baird to compare our pulpit with that of the Lutheran and Reformed churches of the Continent, we find no fault with his delineation: but we should scruple to assert that what is commonly understood as the theology of the American pulpit is superior to that of the evangelical churches of Great Britain. It is a point, however, on which we write with unfeigned diffidence, as willing to defer to the author's greater opportunities for comparison.

There is perhaps no part of this volume which is more worthy of remark than the seventh chapter of the fifth book, upon 'Revivals of Religion.' It is introduced by the author as 'invaluable;' and it proceeds from a gentleman who, in Dr. Baird's judgment, 'is better qualified by his position and by his experience, to write such an article, than any other man' known by him in the United States. To say that it is able, is no more than must be admitted of any thing which proceeds from the pen of Dr. Goodrich. But, since comparisons are odious, we may be allowed to say that we perceive in it nothing which surpasses the wise and copious instructions of Dr. Sprague. We shall also, with we trust, a deep sense of our responsibility, offer some remarks on this essay. We assent in full to all the commendation of the Puritans: they were men of whom the world was not worthy, and they gloried in a system of truth which no efforts of their sons have improved. We agree in what is said with respect to the prominence given in New England to *preaching*, and the

strong faith and expectation of *special* answers to prayer. We join in rejoicing over those early fruits of grace among the first plantations, and at a later day those "harvests" under the preaching of Stoddard. They teach us how little such blessings are connected with the modern changes of opinion, sometimes vaunted as the only means of revival. We admire the felicitous history of the blessed work in the eighteenth century, and of the labours of Edwards and Brainerd. And indeed there is scarcely a sentence in the concise and satisfactory notice of revivals, to which we can object, so far as it is historical. But when the writer proceeds to define more nicely the instrumental causes of these effects, we find him outrunning our convictions, and substituting for the common belief of American Calvinists, the peculiar tenets of his own country and school. And against this, as testimony sent across the ocean, to our brethren of the Reformed Churches, we do most solemnly protest. It is not to the value of doctrinal or frequent or fervent presentation of truth, that we object; surely not. But we complain of injustice done to the system of some of the soundest, most faithful, and most successful ministers the world ever saw, in the views here given of obligation, in respect to the sinner's conversion, and in the implications of the statement which purports to depict our adverse schemes. We desire to use candour; we would not make any man an offender for a word; we abjure, as much as he, the tenet that repentance is not a matter of duty; but we dare not assign, as a cause of true conversion, any doctrine or system which renders the sinner's recourse to God in regeneration *a mere item in a series of duties*. The preaching of Whitefield and the preaching of the Tennents are justly cited as instruments of unexampled awakening; but they would be most untruly and injuriously cited as specimens of a doctrinal system which they repudiated. It is clear as day, being matter of uncontrolled testimony, that the burden of their preaching was Calvinism, old Calvinism, and that in the very sense in which the phrase is often contumeliously employed. They preached obligation, it is true; for they preached the *law*. But who that has read the tomes of the seventeenth century, with all their varied and lengthened anatomy of the "law-work" in the soul, needs to be referred to this branch of gospel-labour as new or peculiar or American? The disposition "to comfort too soon" is mentioned with disapproval. It is a form of speech which may

mean more than meets the eye. And the writer's censure of it may betray a plan of teaching, which represents the great work as a bare legal *submission* to God's rectoral justice, and which excludes the promulgation of Christ's priestly work until such time as the convicted sinner shall have been sufficiently humbled, in the judgment of his spiritual guide. This scheme needs no further designation to those familiar with New England theology; it is one which, in our view, modifies the gospel, if it does not place the law in its stead, so exalting obligation that "grace is no more grace."

The advice to "wait God's time," that man of straw against which so many eastern divines have evinced their prowess, is not our advice; nor have we ever known it to be given. But when the teacher (even though it be the lamented Nettleton) adds, in regard to a distressed soul, "You should *keep him down*, and tell him he must submit to God," we reject the recipe. It wants all scripture warrant. It enjoins an act which, in any valid sense, is impossible without faith; and which, as understood, has nothing evangelical. It hangs a thick curtain before the great object, the sacrifice of Christ, and refuses to raise it, till when? Till the moment when the spiritual guide shall declare the humbling process to be complete. Awful is the responsibility of that man, who shall undertake to determine, when that last drop of consummating anguish has been distilled into the cup of bitterness, or when the instant has arrived when a sinner may behold the Lamb of God without injury! How simple, how plain, how safe, how glorious, in comparison, the scriptural advice to an awakened man! *Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.* Such was the method of Whitefield, as it had been the method of Livingstone, of Knox, of Luther, and of Paul and Silas.

Again, we complain that a metaphysical dogma, unacknowledged, we say not in our common Christianity, but in our common Calvinism, is here crected into a pillar of faith, and held up to the view of transatlantic brethren as a principal means of revival. We mean the New England doctrine of *human ability*. By the New England doctrine we mean what is expressed on page 204, by Dr. Goodrich's language to the sinner: "Your *cannot* therefore is only *will not.*" If the point be simply that such doctrine was, in fact, preached in the late awakenings of New England,

we of course give it up. But if it be intended that such doctrine tends in any the least degree to facilitate the conversion of sinners, we exclaim against the allegation; for the doctrine being new, contrary to the essence of the Reformed faith, savouring of Pelagian error, and diametrically opposite to the plain obvious letter of the word of God, has never produced, and can never produce, any consequences but those which are evil. And among its consequences is that lamentable degeneracy of New England theology, in some of its branches, into a scheme of seeming Pelagianism, which has awakened fear and lamentation among many even in the land of its origin. We do not charge the learned and distinguished writer of these remarks with having penned them with any polemical intention, or with any view to propagate his own avowed opinions; we are not even sure that he consciously gives any representation that is partial. But we lift our hands against this, when recorded as the exponent of American theology. New England is not the world. It is not even America. Great, enlightened, refined and influential as it is, we may nevertheless demand of its able writers, not to forget these minor tracts which lie south of its border, nor to emulate the Chinese exclusiveness of ultra-nationality. There have been revivals beyond their pale. Souls have been converted who never heard the great *catholicon* of ability. Saints are in heaven who maintained beyond a doubt that the carnal mind is enmity against God, and is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. And if Chalmers or Merle d'Aubigne or Krummacher should avert their faces from such a portent as the Calvinism herein displayed, we should long for access to them in order to assure them that there are thousands of Christians in America, who admit the doctrines of depravity and of grace even as themselves.

In justice to Dr. Baird, we add the remark, that what he says in his own person concerning religious revivals, is not open to any similar objections. Indeed we assent with our utmost cordiality, when he gives us his cautions on this point:

“Experience has also taught us the necessity of maintaining order at meetings held during revivals—occasions on which, in consequence of the strong excitement of the most powerful feelings of the human heart, there is a special call for watchfulness in this respect. It is a sad mistake to multiply meetings unnecessarily during revivals,

or to prolong them to unseasonable hours at night, to the exhaustion of strength, the loss of needed repose, and the unnatural and dangerous irritation of the nervous system. Yet these are the points in which the inexperienced are most liable to err. They begin a meeting, say at seven o'clock in the evening. The preacher feels deeply, and the people are much interested. Instead of preaching for an hour, he is tempted, by the manifest attention of his hearers, to go on for an hour and a half or two hours, and instead of sending them home at half past eight o'clock, or at nine at the farthest, so that they may have time for meditation and secret prayer, in which, after all, the sinner is most likely to give his heart unto God, he dismisses them at ten or eleven o'clock, fatigued, yet excited, and altogether unfit for the exercises of the closet. This is sometimes done under the idea that the people would lose their serious impressions were the service to be short. But here there is often a temptation of the Adversary. No revival ever suffered by evening meetings being confined to a moderate length. Let the people be almost compelled to leave the house rather than unduly protract such meetings.

"One of the most important and difficult duties of a minister in a revival, is rightly to direct awakened souls. Alas! how often are even good men found to fail in this. Many ministers, whom I have known, seem to me to excel in addressing unawakened sinners, and yet to fail when called to give clear, intelligible, and scriptural directions to those who are awakened. Many, too, fail in judging of the evidences of conversion, and 'heal the hurt of the people softly.'

"But on no point, I am convinced, from what I have seen in America, is there a greater call for the exercise of a sound prudence than in receiving into the Church persons who entertain the belief that they have 'passed from death unto life.' While they may possibly be kept back too long, the great error lies on the other side. The new convert naturally desires to join himself to those whom he now considers to be the children of God. He thinks that it is his duty to do so, and he may possibly be right. But the office-bearers in the Church, whose duty it is to see to the admission of none but proper persons into it, are no less clearly bound to see that the candidate for membership gives such evidences of piety as, on scriptural grounds, shall be deemed satisfactory. The one may be perfectly right in desiring to enter, and in coming to them for admission; the others may be no less justified in refusing until they have had satisfactory evidence of the applicant's piety. No harm can result from this temporary conflict of duty, if I may call it so. Both seek to do what is right, and both will soon find their way clear.

"I consider hasty admissions to our churches to be the greatest of all the evils connected with revivals in some parts of the country, and among some denominations in particular. But this evil is not peculiar to revivals. It is quite as likely to occur when there is no revival as when there is. With all possible care it is difficult to keep a church pure, in a reasonable sense of that word. How absurd, then, to expect it when the doors are thrown wide open to admit hastily all that profess to be converted! Experience shows the necessity of decided views on this subject, and of firmness in enforcing them. On this point, as well as on all others relating to the discipline and government of the Church, too much care cannot be taken to avoid latitudi-

narian practices. The Church must be kept a living body of believers—a company of persons who have come out from the world, and are determined to adorn the profession which they have made. In their organization and action, order, which is said to be ‘heaven’s first law,’ must be maintained. In this opinion, I am sure, Christians of all denominations in the United States sincerely and entirely concur.” p. 218.

No reader of our pages can be so unreasonable as to expect that we should follow the author in his laborious survey of the churches of America. With great patience, he goes through the entire list, giving compendious notices of the sects; Episcopalians, Congregationalists, Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, in all their variety, Quakers, Papists, Unitarians, Universalists, Swedenborgians, Tunkers, and several others. Much of this detail will be new to many, as it was new to us. Taken by itself, it renders the book one of the most convenient and satisfactory manuals, in regard to American church-history and statistics. Our eye naturally turns to the account given of ourselves. In this, the author has had to contend with unusual difficulties. From the catholic post of observation which the plan of his work constrained him to occupy, he could not be expected to see the divisions among us, exactly as we view them. The facts, in regard to the separation of the two bodies of Presbyterians are given with candour. At the same time, he expresses it as his own opinion, on the one hand, that time should have been allowed for the Western churches to adopt the Presbyterian polity, if they had a mind to do so, before so stringent an act as that of 1838; and, on the other, that the plan of union was decidedly contrary to the constitution of the Church. To the argument for tolerance in respect to the diversities existing from the first in the elements of our body, we attribute no validity; and to the statement which would seem to make the theological differences mere variations in philosophical exposition of common tenets, we object with strong dissent. But it is far from our wish to stir up these embers, and we heartily desire that all parties may be brought nearer together by being brought nearer to the infallible standard. And we applaud the spirit evinced by such words as these, respecting the great body of Evangelical Christians:

“Taking all the professed Christians, amounting, it has been seen, to more than 2,500,000, in our evangelical churches, I hesitate not to say that far more mutual respect and brotherly love prevail among them than would were they all coerced into one denomination. The world has already seen what sort of union and brotherhood can be

produced by all being brought into one immense Church, that admits of no deviation from the decrees of its councils and conclaves. There may, indeed, be external agreement, yet beneath this apparent unanimity there may be internal divisions and heartburnings in abundance. There may be union against all who may dare to impugn her dogmas, but who can tell the almost infernal hatred with which her Religious Orders have been found to regard each other? Compared with this, all the temporary *attritions*, together with all the controversies and exacerbations of feeling that accompany them, that take place in our evangelical Protestant denominations, are as nothing.

“Common civility, on the contrary, concurs with Christian charity to make the enlightened members of one denomination respect and esteem those of another, and to appreciate the beautiful sentiment recently attributed by the chancellor of the exchequer, in the British Parliament, to the late Mr. Wilberforce: ‘I experience,’ said that distinguished philanthropist, ‘a feeling of triumph when I can get the better of these little distinctions which keep Christians asunder. I would not that any one should sacrifice his principles; but, exercising the Protestant right of private judgment, leave each to his own conclusions. It is delightful to see that in this way men of different sects can unite together for the prosecution of their projects for the amelioration of human society. When I thus unite with persons of a different persuasion from myself, it affords me an augmented degree of pleasure; I rise into a higher nature, into a purer air; I feel that fetters which before bound me are dissolved, and I delight in that blessed liberty of love which carries all other blessings with it.’” p. 269.

The sketch of Massachusetts Unitarianism, in the seventh book, is full of instruction. It should be pondered by all who would understand the process by which damnable heresies are privily brought in, or who would learn how the fine gold becomes dim and the wine mingled with water. To one section of this history, we ask particular attention.

“A few years since, German Transcendentalism made its appearance among the Unitarian clergy, and has spread rapidly. Its adherents, generally, are not very profound thinkers, nor very well acquainted with the philosophy which they have embraced, or with the evidence on which it rests. It promises to relieve its disciples from the necessity of building their religious faith and hopes on probabilities, however strong, and to give them an intuitive and infallible knowledge of all that is essential in religion; and it affords an unlimited range for the play of the imagination. It has charms, therefore, for the contemplative and for the enthusiastic.

“The controversy on this subject became public in 1836. It was brought out by an article in the *Christian Examiner*, maintaining that our faith in Christianity does not rest on the evidence of miracles; that a record of miracles, however attested, can prove nothing in favour of a religion not previously seen to be true; and that, therefore, we need to see and admit the reasonableness and truth of the doctrines of Christianity, before we can believe that miracles were wrought to commend it to mankind. The ‘Old School’ Unitarians, as they called themselves, pronounced this theory infidelity, for it struck at the

foundation of the only reasoning by which they proved the truth of Christianity. The controversy was protracted, and somewhat bitter; but no attempt was made by the 'Old School' to separate themselves from those whom they denounced as infidels.

"The charge of Pantheism is brought against the Transcendentalists generally, by their Unitarian opponents; and, in fact, some of their publications are evidently Pantheistic, while others are ambiguous in that respect. Some of them have borrowed largely from Benjamin Constant, and maintain that all religions, from Fetichism to the most perfect form of Christianity, are essentially of the same nature, being only developments, more or less perfect, of the religious sentiment which is common to all men. According to them, all men who have any religious thoughts or feelings are so far inspired; Moses, Minos, and Numa, and a few others, had an unusual degree of inspiration; and Jesus of Nazareth most of all. They do not believe, however, that even Jesus was so inspired as to be in all cases an infallible teacher; and they declare themselves by no means sure that we shall not see his superior. They reject Christ as a mediator in every sense of the term, and declare that, in order to be true Christians, we must hold intercourse with God as Christ himself did, without a mediator.

"These impious doctrines have been promulgated in periodicals and otherwise, from time to time, with increasing boldness. In the spring of the year 1841, they were put forth without disguise and without reserve in a sermon at an ordination at South Boston. Several of the leading Unitarian clergy of the 'Old School' were present, and took part in the services. It is said that some of them, in performing their parts, uttered sentiments at variance with those of the preacher, from which attentive hearers might infer that the sermon did not meet their approbation; but there was no explicit condemnation of the sermon either then or afterward, till public attention was called to the subject by three evangelical clergymen who attended the ordination as hearers, and took notes of the discourse. These three witnesses, some weeks after the ordination, published extracts from the sermon in several religious newspapers, and called on the members of the Ordaining Council to say whether they recognised the preacher as a Christian minister. Public attention was roused. Several intelligent Unitarian laymen united in the demand. Continued silence became impracticable. A number of articles appeared in newspapers and magazines, in which individual Unitarian ministers denounced the sermon, and pronounced its doctrines deistical; but they carefully avoided the question, whether its author was recognised by them as a Christian minister. Others of them preached and wrote in his defence. His ecclesiastical relations still remain undisturbed. Some of his Unitarian neighbours have recognised his ministerial character by exchanging pulpits with him on the Sabbath; and he has, in his turn, preached the weekly lecture maintained by the Unitarian clergy of the Boston Association. It is understood, therefore, that the public avowal of doctrines like his, forms no obstacle to a regular standing in the Unitarian ministry." pp. 278, 279.

But he who would descry all the breadth of this influence from abroad, must take a wider field of observation than

that which is afforded by the Socinian domain. Transcendental philosophy, as the term is used in common parlance, has sent its vapours over other fields. The miasma has penetrated New England schools and colleges; not to the infection of great numbers, but to the great corruption of a few. The term is sufficiently vague. So far from meaning what Kant understood when he employed it, the disciples of this newest school use it as an honourable cloke for whatever is undefined, whatever is unproved, whatever is more allied to poesy than to reasoning, whatever is paradoxical and mystical. It bewitches the young, because it makes them sages without study. It exalts the fanciful, because it invests their dreams with the golden cloud of philosophic diction. It invites the errorist to veil his false opinions under the garb of unwouted and indeterminate formulas. It makes religion easy to the carnal mind by presenting, as spiritualism, schemes of belief which are independent of the Holy Spirit. Wherever we meet with it, whether in the groves and high places of prelacy, or the mines of profound metaphysics, we find a species of religion which harmonizes the most discordant creeds, embraces, as in good part true, the revelation of the Bramin and the Academic; undervalues all the vulgar modes of gracious experience; and either discards the old-time phraseology of scripture, or attaches to it a meaning altogether new. Nowhere have we seen it adding strength to the arguments of natural religion, the admitted proofs of God's existence, or the historical evidences of Christianity. Nowhere has it been employed to brighten the ordinary manifestations of private, domestic and social piety, or stimulate to extraordinary efforts for the conversion of souls. Whether Coleridge or Cousin be the hierophant, the initiated novice has alike been led away from the faith of his childhood and of the church. There are many dangerous steps which may be taken, before a man reaches the godless chasm of pantheism. And we earnestly exhort our younger brethren—since among them the chief conversions are made—to postpone their adventures into these shadowy tracts, until they shall have disciplined themselves by a more than usual regimen of stern, hard, dialectical exercise; such as will not weaken them in the conflict with error; such as made the great scholastic minds originate systems that, far from perishing like waves, have subsisted as mountains; such as brought out the sinew and sharpened the sagacity of Calvin, Zanchius, Twisse, and

Edwards. Especially let them distrust all overtures, from whatever quarter, which must have for their certain result, to reduce to a dead letter all the written theology of past ages, and all the experimental records of the church; to engender a sickly hankering after every eccentric and obscure heresy, from the Gnostics and Montanus down to Swedenborg and Behmen; and which under the pretext of destroying rationalism will destroy reason itself. Better by far, in our judgment, the stiffest scholasticism of a Voetius or a De Moor, if conjoined with reverence for scripture and devotion to Christ, than the most Platonic flights of a Schleiermacher, if destitute of the catholic experience of grace in the heart.

It was no part of Dr. Baird's intention to direct public notice to the new metaphysics; but we regard the matter as having such relations to the state of religion in America, as will justify us in spending some time on it. Many even among our readers will probably think our labour ill-bestowed, in chasing an ignis-fatuus. Let such reflect, however, that it is not superfluous to warn men against the false-light which seduces from the path of orthodoxy. If it were a scientific arrangement of dogmas, in any method whatever, the danger would be less. But after careful, long-continued, and for a time not suspicious quest, we are unable to produce any series of clear propositions which our new philosophy offers to maintain. It avoids categorical assertion. It deals in vague, intangible, rhapsodical, circumlocution. To join issue, on definite points, after the manner of the schools, is against its policy. Its followers are therefore of every creed, from Popery down to Socinianism, Deism, and Atheism. Proud complacency in an alleged insight, penetrating beyond the ken of common minds, almost precludes the usual trials of logical conflict. Some are ready, therefore, to say, 'what need is there of any alarm? Why should we give ourselves any care about schemes so visionary and fantastic? Why not let them float away, as successive clouds of the same sort have floated away in Germany?'—To this the answer is easy. We fully expect these baseless visions to be dissipated, without the breath of opposition. But while they are passing over us, they are leaving behind an influence of which the evil is positive. If they were only high sounding assumptions of reason in its loftier functions, of spiritualism, and of converse with universal beauty and truth, we might

leave the dreamers to complete their dream. But they have this unfailing characteristic—*they unsettle the foundations*. Professing the research of elementary, fundamental, nay eternal truth, they deny the validity of all the popular conclusions, on which are built the evidences of our faith. Hence it is almost distinctive of all the discordant members of this school, to disparage and decry the systematic theology of the reformation; the methods of Newton, Locke, Reid and Stewart; the philosophical efforts of Edwards. Hence, also, if any credit is to be given to them, we are brought to the necessity of settling on a new basis the whole fabric of Apologetical Theology. For we must, according to them, abandon as untenable the entire teleological argument for the Being of God, and the entire historical evidence of Christianity. What this imports, we need not pause to explain to those who prize the results of theological inquiry during past ages. But we re-affirm, that independently of any positive dogmas of philosophy by those who call themselves Transcendentalists, there is in their teaching a tendency to unsettle the basis of our common belief, a tendency so determinate and universal, as to justify us in uttering the strongest *caveat*. And we are held to nothing more, until more definite and appreciable results of their system shall be evolved, in the shape of propositions to be disproved.

It is very common to hear even good people, in and about Boston, express the opinion, that this visionary scheme is useful, as leading men from Rationalistic and Deistical tenets to evangelical religion. They will not indeed call it daylight, but the twilight between night and day. They cite instances, in which Unitarians have become transcendental, as a first step towards becoming Christian. They further tell us cases like that of Tholuck, in Germany, where such opinions have led to evangelical truth. To this we shall not reply by denying the fact of such transitions: but we have a different solution for the problem. The great constitutional vice of Unitarian religion is its coldness. It gives no play to the higher and warmer emotions. It is this which thins their assemblies and petrifies their worship, which leads an Emerson to confess, that all the more enthusiastic kinds of religion, even in Calvinism and Methodism, “are varying forms of that shudder of awe and delight with which the individual soul always mingles with the universal soul.” It is this which

causes Unitarian pulpits to resound with harangues on Slavery, Spirituous liquors, Capital punishment, Texas, Aesthetics, any thing but Christ; and which drives their noblest minds from theology to politics, as in the cases of Everett, Sparks, Bancroft, and Palfrey. It is this which portends and will accomplish the death of Unitarianism in its present form. This being the case, it is not wonderful that minds which feel it, and which long for something to enkindle the affections, should seize on error rather than truth. From believing too little, they turn straightway to believing too much; from Deism to mysticism; from Socinus to Swedenborg; and, as a type of the process, Mr. Brownson has verified the predictions of his opponents, and leaped outright into the arms of Popery. To eyes just opening upon something more glorious than the ghosts which traverse the cold fields of 'liberal Christianity,' there is certainly a charm in the mystical phase of German philosophy, to which they often yield themselves. Nay more, out of this number, some, finding that they have made Ixion's mistake, grow dissatisfied with the phantom, and embrace the gospel reality. But shall we therefore use the phantom as a decoy? Shall we be accessory to a falsehood, because it has in numerous instances been the last of a train of falsehoods, previous to admitting the truth? To do so would shock every maxim of philosophical honesty. Let us proclaim the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. And let us remember, that if this newer infidelity has been the stepping-stone, upwards, to the gospel, it may be, for the same reason, the stepping-stone, downwards, to infidelity. Instead, therefore, of holding up to the gaze of a mind which is becoming less incredulous and more intent on the venerable and lovely, a 'counterfeit presentment,' in the shape of any philosophy, we would hold up to it, what is far more venerable, and far more lovely, the genuine portion of the soul, Christ crucified, and we would hold it up, not with philosophic euphemisms, or the circumlocutions of doubt, but in the clear, categorical, established formulas of Reformed Theology. This directness in preaching the gospel, even to the most fastidious, tasteful, and sentimental, is the neglected but infallible method. We take it to be the very wand to disenchant the victims of philosophical sorcery: yea, the sword of the Spirit, to hew down all imaginations. The day of judgment is impending too nearly for us to make circuits, and wait for Harvard to

lay aside its contempt for evangelical cant. So to wait, is to make the cross of Christ 'of none effect.' The Greeks will 'seek after wisdom,' and call the cross 'foolishness;' but our best hope of turning their minds is in determining to know nothing among them but Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

Dr. Baird has a chapter on 'the state of Theological Opinion in America.' Most of his remarks on this subject appear to be just. But we fail, in some degree, to apprehend the following passage, if it is not partial and open to objection.

"The great achievement of the American theology is, that it has placed the doctrine of the atonement for sin in the clearest light, by illustrations drawn from the nature of a moral government. Nowhere is the distinction between the work of Christ as the propitiation for the sins of men, and that of the Holy Spirit in renewing and sanctifying the sinner, more clearly drawn—nowhere is the necessity of each to the salvation of the soul more constantly and forcibly exhibited. The tendency of our theology, under the impulse of the Edwardean exposition of the doctrine of atonement, is to avoid the habit—so common to philosophers and philosophizing theologians—of contemplating God exclusively as the First Cause of all beings and all events, and to fix attention upon him as a moral governor of beings made for responsible action. Here it is that the God of the Bible differs from the God of philosophy. The latter is simply a first cause—a reason why things are—sometimes, if not always, a mere hypothesis to account for the existence of the universe, another name for nature or for fate. The former is a moral governor, that is, a lawgiver, a judge, a dispenser of rewards and penalties. God's law is given to the universe of moral beings for the one great end of promoting the happiness of that vast empire. As a law, it is a true and earnest expression of the will of the lawgiver respecting the actions of his creatures. As a law, it must be sanctioned by penalties adequate to express God's estimation of the value of the interests trampled on by disobedience. As the law is not arbitrary, but the necessary means of accomplishing the greatest good, it may not be arbitrarily set aside. Therefore, when man had become apostate, and the whole human race was under condemnation, God sent his Son into the world, in human nature, 'to be made a sin-offering for us;' and thus by his voluntary sufferings magnifying the law, 'to declare the righteousness of God, that God may be just, and the justifier of him who believeth.' Thus it is that God, as a moral governor, is glorified in the forgiveness of sinners; that He calls upon all men to repent, with a true and intense desire for their salvation; that He sends into a world of rebellion the infinite gift of his Spirit, to impart life to those who are dead in sin; that in a world of sinners, who, if left to themselves, would all reject the offered pardon, He saves those whom he has chosen out of the world; and he uses the co-operation of redeemed and renewed men in advancing the work of saving their fellow-men. Men are saved from

sin and condemnation, not by mere power, but by means that harmonize with the nature and conduce to the ends of God's moral government. This method of illustrating the Gospel carries the preacher and the theologian back from the Platonic dreams and dry dogmatizing of the schools, to the Bible. It sets the theologian upon studying, and the preacher upon imitating, the freedom, simplicity, and directness, with which the Apostles addressed the understandings and sensibilities of men. And thus it may be regarded as coinciding with other indications of the tendency of religious opinion in the various evangelical bodies of America." pp. 291, 292.

Upon this statement we offer one or two strictures; premising that we have no reason to rank the esteemed author in any school of theological opinion other than our own. And first, we are unable to assert of any theology, which can be distinguished as *American*, any addition of clearness to the doctrine of *Atonement*. Several incompatible doctrines are taught in America, by churches called evangelical. We have, for instance, the doctrine of John Calvin and John Owen, which is taught, in the very terms of the Reformed Confessions, by Presbyterians of all the stricter sorts. We have the doctrine of John Wesley, a modified Arminianism, taught in every iota prescribed by the founder, throughout the immense body of Methodists. We have the doctrine of Murdock, Fitch, Taylor, and Finney; for, omitting minor differences, it is the same; taught more or less extensively in and out of New England. These have no common trait so prominent, as to justify us in asserting of them, that they, or their common tenets, open a clearer view of this august subject than had previously been attained.

But if, as seems to result from what has been said, this achievement of American theology has been effected by a particular school, it must be that of New England. This is more likely to be the meaning, when we re-peruse the sentences alluding to Edwards. Of Edwards himself, we cannot write but with profound reverence. But we are unable to call to mind in his works, any new mode of presenting this specific doctrine, which has in the least degree freed it from difficulty. His treatment of this point agrees with that of the old divines. This great philosopher did indeed offer new and imperishable argument and illustration, on some topics; such as the nature of holiness and of sin, human freedom, the nature of inability, the ultimate end of creation, and the millennium; but in regard to the nature of the Atonement (and we are restricted to this by the references in the passage cited) Edwards founded no school

and made no special communications which were new.

Even though the New England view of the Atonement should be attributed to an Edwardean exposition of truth, we regard the statement above as liable to misapprehension. For it assumes that the mode which preceded of representing the Atonement, was unhappy and obscure, and even that it contemplated "God exclusively as the First Cause of all beings and events." Now, the European reader will naturally ask, 'What system of teaching is here censured?' And we are forced to reply that we know of no system which can be intended except that which is exhibited by the Dordrecht divines, by Owen, Charnock, and Flavel, by Dick, Symington, and Hill, by Witherspoon, Mason, and Romeyn. Plain readers will think of this as the system on which improvement has been made. It is not only our own creed, but it is one which is far from lying open to any charge of undervaluing or cloaking the moral government of God. Beyond all other creeds it exalts the divine Justice, even his vindicatory Justice; beyond all others, it establishes the truth (as expressed by the author) that the law "must be sanctioned by penalties adequate to express God's estimation of the value of the interests trampled on by disobedience."

The paragraph which we have extracted purports to set forth the great achievement of American Theology. The propositions which it contains may be regarded therefore as exhibiting, briefly, the conclusions of this theology, on this point. Now it is remarkable, that excepting an implied censure of some foregoing systems, there is not a proposition here which does not command our assent, nay, which would not command the assent of the most rigid Scotch Calvinist of the seventeenth century.

If, however, the view of the Atonement indicated above is the view presented by the 'New Theology,' we do not merely reject it as erroneous, but we protest against its being held forth as *American*: and if, on the other hand, it is the evangelical view, as proposed by the Reformers and their successors, down to the days of Merle, Krummacher, Cunningham, Welsh, and Stevenson, we cannot consider it an achievement of our preachers, or of our own day.

Nothing could have induced us to express even this moderate dissatisfaction with Dr. Baird's eulogium of 'American Theology,' but our knowledge that the phrase is widely used by transatlantic writers to denote a scheme

which we reject, as a retrocession from reformed doctrine; and our full persuasion, that nothing is so much needed to correct the bias of our own preachers, as a hearty return to the cordial, gracious truths maintained by our forefathers in Great Britain and ancient Massachusetts. After all, we thank Dr. Baird for his work. Our exceptions might indicate something like disapproval of the book. On the contrary, the passages on which we have remarked occupy a very small space, and are scarcely connected with the main scope. We are so far from scrupling to recommend the whole, that there is no one chapter which we would not recommend. We are enlightened and warmed by the patriotic and filial vindication of our country, and especially by the closing chapters. And where we think the author has conveyed a wrong impression, in regard to doctrinal statements, we ascribe it to an impulse not ungenerous, which would exalt the opinions of a large portion of our clergy beyond their proper place.

In style, the work is much superior to any which have before proceeded from the author. And we repeat our judgment, that it occupies a place which no other book has attempted to fill, and that it merits a permanent place in our libraries.

Chas. Fodge & G. A. Spinks.

ART. III.—*Sacerdotal Absolution: a Sermon, preached before the Convention of the Diocese of North Carolina, 1843.* By the Rev. M. A. Curtis, Rector of St. Matthew's Church, Hillsborough, N. C. Published by request. New York: James A. Sparks. 1844. 8vo. pp. 33.

By absolution is meant the authoritative forgiveness of sins; by sacerdotal absolution, the exercise of this official power by the Christian ministry, considered as a priesthood. The doctrine of sacerdotal absolution, therefore, comprehends two dogmas; first, that Christian ministers are priests, and then, that as priests, they possess this power of forgiving sins. Now these two propositions are not only distinguishable, but distinct; they do not involve each other; the truth of the one does not necessarily imply the truth of the other. It is perfectly conceivable that the ministry might have the power claimed without being priests; and on the other hand,