

THE
PRINCETON REVIEW.

JANUARY, 1847.

No. I.

ART. I.—*Discourses and Reviews upon Questions in Controversial Theology and Practical Religion.* By Orville Dewey, D.D., Pastor of the Church of the Messiah in New York. New York: C. S. Francis & Co. 1846. pp. 388. 12mo.

THE author of these discourses stands in the very first rank of Unitarian literature. As a pulpit orator, his reputation is distinguished, and the post which he occupies in our greatest city adds importance to whatever he may choose to utter. For these reasons, and because it is some time since a polemic volume has been produced, on the side of Anti-trinitarianism, we are disposed to subject it to a serious examination.

With a few exceptions, which shall be noted in their proper place, these essays are not chargeable with the usual offensiveness of controversial writing. Dr. Dewey possesses all the qualifications which are needed to give seemliness and polish to the form of his opinions. He shines more to our apprehension, in the gentle glow of sentiment, than in the conflict of reasoning. Nothing is more characteristic of the whole work, than a disposition to avoid bold statement of positions, sharp cutting of defin-

ing lines, and penetrating analysis of philosophical difficulties. The shudder with which the author sometimes flies back from metaphysical methods, (as on page seventy-third,) is more amiable in the saloon, than dignified in the field of disputation. Yet he is not a common man, and where he is in the right, as he frequently is, we admire the perspicuity and scholarlike elegance, with which he can express a familiar truth.

This volume, as we learn from its first sentence, is designed to give a comprehensive reply to the question, What is Unitarianism? This is encouraging; for no one cause has hitherto more prevented successful debate, than a sickly dread of disputation, and a studied vagueness and even reticency, in regard to the points at issue. In telling us what Unitarianism is, Dr. Dewey seems to have found it strangely necessary to tell us also what Calvinism is. Of this we make no complaint: but was it necessary, or pertinent to the design above stated? If the reason is, that of all schemes of opinion, Calvinism is that which shows the strongest lines; that of all defenders of ancient faith, Calvinists have been the most determined; or that of all opponents, ours are the most opposed; we accept the omen in good part. The fact in regard to this volume is obvious to him who only opens its pages. The very first essay is constructed, with reference to the views of Calvinists. A laboured treatise is given, on 'the Five points of Calvinism.' Another treatise discusses the 'Calvinistic Views of Moral Philosophy;' and, everywhere, the form of Christianity which our author depicts, is the Calvinistic form. He allows himself to forget, that it was not Calvinism, but Trinitarianism, which he was held to refute.

The book opens with an article intituled, 'The Unitarian Belief.' This *creed* is marked by a careful avoidance of the more repulsive points of Socinianism, and as careful an approach as honesty will allow, to the words of sound doctrine. We might have expected such articles as these: Unitarians believe that the Son and the Spirit are not divine persons; Unitarians believe that Jesus Christ was a mere man; Unitarians believe that faith and works are the same thing;* Unitarians believe

* 'Belief and unbelief, in Scripture use, embrace in their meaning, essential right and wrong, virtue and vice, religion and irreligion.' p. 318. Yet a little after he says, 'Man cannot stand before God, demanding heaven, for his keeping of the moral law.' p. 323.

that future punishment is not eternal. But this is not the method pursued. We are far from charging the author with a purpose to deceive: we indicate the policy as characteristic of the party, from the days of the Council of Nice. Witness the accession of the Arians, save in a single *iota*, to the homoöusian symbols. If space were allowed us, we should be glad to transcribe every word of Augustine's oral debate with Maximinus, the Arian bishop. It would show the disposition common to all who reject the divinity of our Lord, to fly from too abrupt an avowal of their extreme opinions. The terms used in all these cases are not such as are best suited to express fairly and fully the doctrines maintained, but such as to the ear are most like the orthodox confession.

In this exposition of his faith, Dr. Dewey sets himself against those who say, that his 'creed consists of negations.' Although we could ask no better proof of this offensive proposition, than this very article, we shall now state what Unitarians actually believe. 1. They believe, according to our author, "in the Father, and in the Son, and in the Holy Ghost." 2. They "believe in the Atonement." 3. They "believe in human depravity." 4. They believe "that men are to be recovered, by a process which is termed in the scriptures, regeneration." 5. They believe "in the doctrine of election." 6. They believe in a future state of rewards and punishments. 7. They believe "in the supreme and all-absorbing importance of religion." Now we would not wrong an adversary, in particular one of so many amiable qualities as our author; but we cannot conceal our astonishment at this mode of statement. Knowing, as we do, and as Dr. Dewey knows, how many derive all their knowledge of a treatise from the heads or titles of its parts, and knowing that this is a phraseology appropriated by immemorial usage to the orthodox faith, we regard it as a glaring impropriety to employ this very phraseology to denote the precise opposite. We yield all the advantage which may flow from the acknowledgment, that in the body of the essay, Dr. Dewey, after these several declarations, duly proceeds to empty each of them of all evangelical meaning. We admit that Bible speech is common property; but we contend that thus to use it is neither open nor politic dealing. And if we are asked, in what way the objections to Trinitarian doctrine—for of such objections the Essay is

made up—should be expressed, we reply just as Trinitarians express their repugnance to the opposing scheme, fully, clearly, and in terms which leave no man in doubt, for a single sentence.

When we penetrate to the interior of these statements, we find that meager and unsatisfying religion which belongs to all who reject the gospel. We find that if Jesus “*is* God in his nature, yet as Mediator between God and man, he cannot be regarded as God.” We find that the Holy Spirit is the “power of God,” or “divine influence.” And we find that the Atonement is a vague something, which we cannot and need not explain:

“But what now is the meaning of all this phraseology, and of much more that is like it? Certainly it is, that there is some connexion between the sufferings of Christ and our forgiveness, our redemption from sin and misery. This we all believe. But what *is* this connexion? Here is all the difficulty: here is all the difference of opinion. We all believe, all Christians believe, that the death of Christ is a means of our salvation. But how is it a means? Was it, some one will say, perhaps, as if he were putting us to the test; was it an atonement, a sacrifice, a propitiation? We answer, that it was an atonement, a sacrifice, a propitiation. But now the question is, *what is* an atonement, a sacrifice, a propitiation? And this is the difficult question; a question, to the proper solution of which much thought, much cautious discrimination, much criticism, much knowledge and especially of the ancient Hebrew sacrifices, is necessary. Can we not “receive the atonement,” without this knowledge, this criticism, this deep philosophy? What then is to become of the mass of mankind, of the body of Christians? Can we not savingly “receive the atonement,” unless we adopt some particular explanation, some peculiar creed, concerning it? Who will dare to answer this question in the negative, when he knows that the Christian world, the Orthodox Christian world, is filled with differences of opinion concerning it? The Presbyterian Church of America is, at this moment, rent asunder on this question. Christians are, every where, divided on the questions, whether the redemption is particular or general; whether the sufferings of Christ were a literal endurance of the punishment due to sin, or only a moral equivalent; and whether this equivalency, supposing this to be the true explanation, consists in the endurance of God’s displeasure against sin, or only in a simple manifestation of it.” pp. 10, 11.

We should like to see the difference pointed out between this scheme of atonement, and that which has been maintained by some theologians, not Unitarian. For our part we abjure that theology which seeks not to know the connexion between Christ’s sufferings and our forgiveness. The link which is here dropped is the very support of faith. Give us all the superstitions of the *Tridentinum*, rather than a system without expiation. The last sentence of the extract above might furnish occasion for remark and vindication, but we forbear. Dr.

Dewey's notion of atonement is—"reconciliation, not of God to us, but of us to God." As he does not argue this point at length, we merely record our dissent.

In regard to human depravity, Dr. Dewey maintains that it is not of nature. For "human nature, nature as it exists in the bosom of an infant, is nothing else but capability; capability of good as well as evil, though more likely from its exposures to be evil than good." These are words easily uttered; but as no proof is alleged, and as we do not recognise the statement as intuitively true, we pass to other matters.

There is no part of the work before us, in which the amiable author's strength more remarkably breaks down under a great argument, than in his attempt to show that Unitarians believe in Election. Dr. Dewey has good reasons for inveighing, as he sometimes does, at metaphysics; it is certainly not the field in which his laurels are to be won. Referring his doctrines to their legitimate paternity, he says, of election, "Our good old Arminian fathers fought with it for many a day." He might have added, and with weapons of better temper than their sons; as better knowing what they opposed, and where the real difficulties lay. The Unitarians, we are here told, believe in God's universal prescience. We are glad that they go so far. But, it is added: "*We believe in election, not in selection.*" Here the reader, who is at all familiar with his language, may excusably rub his eyes and suspect his vision, or the typography. Can it be that we are reduced to the necessity of showing that election and selection are identical? Must we go to Ainsworth to find that *eligo*, from *e* and *lego*, means "to choose, elect, or pick out;" and that *selectio*, from *se* and *lego*, means "to choose out, to pick, and lay aside, to cull?" Must we quote Johnson, to show that *election* is "the act of *selecting* one or more, from a greater number?" We spare our readers the infliction, and reserve our comments for the sequel.

Under the head of future punishment, we thus read: "'Life everlasting' and 'everlasting fire;' the mansions of rest, and the worm that never dieth, are phrases fraught with a just and reasonable, but at the same time, vast and indefinite import. They are too obviously figurative to permit us to found definite and literal statements upon them." In all our perusal of theological treatises, we call to mind no greater instance of laxity in

reasoning. We are charged with changing the vast into the literal, and the indefinite into the definite. We may not, on these phrases found 'definite statements;' they are vast and indefinite. We grant it, and read the objection with astonishment; for, let us respectfully ask, what is so vast as eternity, or so indefinite as infinity? Definite! we are so far from this, that we assert a continuance of punishment to such a degree indefinite, as to have no limit. The exclusion of such a limit is the meaning, and the only meaning of the terms in question. In all that occurs upon this awful topic, there is a vagueness which leaves nothing tangible, except the denial of what the scriptures plainly teach. When Dr. Dewey says, "Let them consider that a hell of the mind, the hell of an inwardly gnawing and burning conscience, the hell of remorse and mental agony, may be more horrible than fire and brimstone, and the blackness of darkness forever;" he does not touch our opinion; we subscribe to the language. The question of the species of pain is incidental: the great point is its eternity, and this point is not reached by the declaration of the paragraph.

In a somewhat florid passage the author exhibits his views of the importance of religion; they are just but imperfect. Take, for example, what follows:

"Thou canst not alter it. Go and bid the mountain walls sink down to the level of the valleys; go and stand upon the seashore and turn back its swelling waves; or stretch forth thy hand and hold the stars in their courses: but not more vain shall be thy power to change them, than it is to change one of the laws of thy nature. *Then thou must be virtuous.* As true it is, as if the whole universe spoke in one voice, *thou must be virtuous.* If thou art a sinner, thou 'must be born again.' If thou art tempted, thou must resist. If thou hast guilty passions, thou must deny them. If thou art a bad man, thou must be a good man." p. 26.

This then is the grand result of the gospel message, *Thou must be virtuous—if thou art a bad man, thou must be a good man.* Here we have the contents of that religion, which demanded for its inculcation, a supernatural intervention, and a Messiah! If the associations of the subject were not so sublime, we might say, that the tameness and bathos of this passage are simply ludicrous. But they show at a glance the tendencies and the emptiness of the system which is to supersede the riches of grace. Lessons as sound and clear as this may be found, we say not in Seneca or Confucius, but in Lokman or Esop.

The volume before us contains a series of essays, on "the

Questions at issue between Orthodox and Liberal Christians." Of course the chief place is occupied by the doctrine of the Trinity. On this the author has laid out his strength. Many things are said ingeniously, nothing formidably. Omitting irrelevant matter, the argument opens with this position. "The human mind I aver, is so constituted that it *cannot* conceive of three agents, sustaining to each other the relations asserted by the doctrine of the Trinity, without conceiving of them as three Gods."

Now we might, with great justice, meet this bold and naked averment with as bold and naked a denial; inasmuch as it is followed by nothing in the nature of argument to this particular point; that is, by nothing to prove such relation to be inconceivable. But as it is a question of singular importance, and especially as it is urged with extraordinary complacency, and as settling the whole matter, we shall enter somewhat into the inquiry, if it be only to show, that Dr. Dewey is not authorized to terminate this controversy of ages, *stans pede in uno*. That we do not misrepresent his estimate of the assertion, is manifest from these words following: "In simple truth, I do not see why any reader on this subject need go further than this. Till something credible is offered to be proved; till something better than absolute contradiction is proposed as a matter of belief; who is bound to attend to the argument?"

That which the author avers, is, that such a tripersonal distinction as differs from tritheism is inconceivable. By its being inconceivable, he must mean one of two things; either, first that it is self-contradictory, or that it is beyond the human faculties to form a comprehensive notion of it. We shall examine both. He may mean, first, that it is self-contradictory.

That this is at least included, seems plain from the phrases just cited: "till something better than absolute self-contradiction is proposed as a matter of belief."

In defence of ancient doctrine, we may well be excused for advancing ancient reasons. especially in answer to objections so truly ancient. What special cogency the author has attributed to the bare form of his statement, which should invest it with such a triumphant character, we know not: for, when compared with his brief discussion, and when examined on its own merits, it turns out to be the old objection, that what we assert involves

a contradiction *in adjecto*. Such a contradiction would exist, if we maintained, that the persons are three in the same sense in which they are one. But this has been most constantly disclaimed, from the earliest dates of the controversy. Such a unity is inconceivable, contradictory, absurd, incredible, and therefore false. The whole catholic terminology, in all its minutiae, has been constructed for the very purpose of avoiding this misconception. It was in search of this, that the anxious definitions of the Councils and of Greek and Latin Fathers laboured to express what was above human intellect; the reason being well given by Augustin: "cum enim conaretur humana inopia loquendo proferre ad hominum sensus, quod in secretario mentis pro captu tenet de Domino Deo creatore suo."* Hence the use of that offensive term, ἰπερίστας; hence that source of discord, ὁμοούσιον; hence the very term Trinity. The ancients contended for what, in Tertullian's phrase, is "adunata Trinitas." Catholic theology maintains a divine oneness, *with distinction*; that there are three divine persons, and not three natures, for all participate of one divine nature and this, not by division, but by communication. It holds that the perfection of the infinite essence may admit of a distinction which cannot be true of finite persons, and which excludes partition, while it does not exclude unity. This may be too high for our intellect, but it is not contradictory. Labouring for fit expression, the Fathers used such language as this, of the adorable persons: "Et haec omnia nec confuse unum sunt, nec disjuncta tria sunt."† It is to avoid such self-contradiction, that the Athanasian creed, with what would otherwise be mere tautology, declares: "We worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity, neither confounding the Persons, nor dividing the substance. They are not three eternal, but one eternal. They are not three Almighty, but one Almighty. They are not three Gods, but one God." And this assertion, of one undivided essence, communicated with such a distinction as gives room for the use of the personal pronouns, and for reciprocal action, is not self-contradictory.

The objections, therefore, which are uged, in the single paragraph of argumentation which follows the averment, do by no means touch the point. For, speaking of the Father and the Son, he asks: "Is it possible for any human mind to contemplate

* August. Opp. VIII. 1313. ed. Paris.

† August. Opp. II. 911.

these relations without conceiving of those between whom they existed, as two distinct self-conscious Beings?" Waving, for a little, the question of comprehensibility or adequate conception, we might give just the answer which he craves, without bating a jot of catholic verity, only, to avoid ambiguity, reading *persons* for *beings*. We admit the Father and the Son, as distinct; it is, by admission, a *distinction*. We admit self-conscious existence, as predicable of the Father and the Son; but we deny three natures, three divine essences, and three Gods. It is therefore possible to believe the *fact*, (we are aware how unsuitable the word) that these relations exist, and yet not to believe that they exist between two distinct essences. "The Father, by supposition," adds the author, "must have known that he was not the Son. The Son must have known that he was not the Father." Most assuredly. It is precisely what is intended by the hypostatic distinction. But whither does this tend? The inference is valid, as against Praxeas, Noetus, and Sabellius, but not as against the catholic symbols. Again and again, is this avowal made, by the most strenuous asserters of the Trinity, and amidst their strongest assertions of it. "Proinde in unum Deum, Patrem et Filium et Spiritum Sanctum, firma pietate credamus, ita ut nec Filius credatur esse qui Pater est, nec Pater qui Filius est, nec Pater nec Filius qui utriusque Spiritus est."* In their strongest language concerning the ἐμπεριχώρησις, or ineffable union of the Divine Persons, the Fathers most stedfastly affirm their real distinction. Yet it is against such a unity and trinity, in one and same sense, that almost all the doctrinal arguments of adversaries are directed.

But the objection which we are considering may mean, secondly, that it is beyond the human faculties to acquire a comprehensive notion of such a relation. Under this head, there are several things to be said, which may have been expected under the preceding. We adhere to the distinction so admirably set forth by Boyle, between that which is against, and that which is above reason. We rejoice to think, that the human mind may, on divine authority, believe that to be existent and true, which it cannot reduce to a comprehensive conception; which it cannot imagine in an adequate idea, if we may use the

* August. Opp. II. 904. Ep. clxix.

old term; which it cannot make the object of mental vision; which it cannot explain, as to its *δύσις*; and which it cannot reconcile with every other revelation. We maintain that the terms in which this relation is indicated are intelligible. We express the relation in propositions, which, singly viewed, are not merely not contradictory, but are conceivable. We declare, first, that there is one God, and secondly, that there are three divine Persons. That, by one and the same effort of mind, we should be able to behold the splendour of both these truths in harmony, is no more to be demanded, than that we should be able to gaze undazzled into the face of the sun.

When we say that the mode of the divine existence is incomprehensible, we say only that we are creatures; and we say what is true of other verities. The objection erects an arbitrary criterion of truth; seeming to demand, that we should believe nothing of which we cannot frame some consistent mental representation, or which we cannot think of (*vorstellen*) as a clear object of comprehensive intellect. But even in matters of sense, that may have credible reality, which cannot be seen at one glance, or all at once. No man can at once take in three hundred and sixty degrees of our poor horizon. No man can behold, or even imagine, the whole superficies of the most diminutive sphere. And, rising to the field of the higher reason, we may inquire, who can attain any comprehension of Eternity, existence without beginning or end? Who can conceive, in any adequate manner, of the Omnipresent God; not partly here and partly there; but fully in every point, without division? After all that has been urged, the sum of objection is, that the doctrine is incomprehensible. We admit it. So is God. So is even that Unity of God, which is justly gloried in, but which must be rejected, if these principles are applied. We are beyond our depth the very instant we undertake to fathom the mode of the divine unity. And we regard it as presumption of no common order, to aver, that there are no distinctions in the godhead, but such as we can measure in the span of our understanding.

Trinitarians, according to our author, do not believe their own doctrine. "Practical Unitarianism has always been the general faith of Christendom." This is after all, a re-assertion of the charge, that the unity of God is consistent only with a denial of the trinity. The only proof of this newly discovered self-decep-

tion of catholic Christendom is, that when a man prays to Christ, it will be found, that he "has forgotten the Father for the time," and when he "prays to the Father *through* the Son, he is, and his mind compels him to be, virtually a Unitarian." While we regard the author as ascending a tribunal to which he has no right, and while we might plead *coram non judice*, we shall reply as follows. That addresses to the Father give a prominence to the first person of the adorable Trinity, as the fountain of Deity, militates in no degree against the genuineness of belief in the other persons. Such prominence is universally conceded, in full consistency with coequal glory. That any one adorable Person may, for the time, so occupy the contemplation and the faith, as to be its chief, nay its sole object, is only a phenomenon of mental abstraction, and an instance of that finite imbecility to which we have adverted. That God may even, for a time, be regarded, in respect to his essence and nature, as one, rather than in respect to any distinction of persons, is possible, and is fully compatible with the profoundest veneration of the Trinity. But the truer statement of Christian experience is, that so glorious is the indissoluble union of the three divine persons, that he who falls down in the presence of one, bows himself consciously before the triune Jehovah. Or, in the beautiful language of Gregory Nazianzen: "I cannot contemplate the One, but I am surrounded by the shining of the Three; I cannot distinguish the Three, but straightway I am borne onward to the One."*

But it is impossible to believe the doctrine, say our opponents; and no man has ever believed it. "It has existed in studies, in creeds, in theses, in words; but not in the actual conceptions of men, not in their heartfelt belief." p. 60. Our first reply to this regards the temper of the allegation. It is unreasonable and arrogant. The question is one of psychological fact, to be determined by observation and testimony, and not by the dictum, however loud, of any or of all the deniers of a divine Redeemer. Our second reply respects the truth of the assertion. It is a doctrine so unreasonable, forsooth, that no human being can believe it; and, of course, we may add, under any stress of evidence. This is by no means a novel mode of assaulting Christianity. It is the short method of the Deists, with all the

* In serm. de sacro Bapt.

doctrines peculiar to revelation. Thus it is, for example, that Hume says to his fellow men, "You cannot justly believe in a miracle; *the thing is impossible, and faith is impossible.*" And how is Hume to be answered? The best reply is to give the identical words of Dr. Dewey, as found on his two hundred and thirty-fourth page. "The author who says to his fellow-men, 'You cannot justly believe in a miracle; the thing is impossible, and faith is impossible,' transcends the bounds of all human experience, if not of all human patience. Because almost all men, who have ever lived, *have* believed in miracles. And is not the very question before us, in fact, a question about experience? Could all men have believed in miracles, if, as our author contends, an original and fundamental law of the mind forbade their believing in them? Is it not as unphilosophical, as it is intolerable, to say that all mankind have been found believing in a thing which is plainly impossible?"

We are completely satisfied with this: nothing could furnish us a better reply. To say that the Trinity cannot be believed, "transcends the bounds of all human experience, if not of all human patience." Because almost all Christians who have ever lived, *have* believed in the Trinity. "And is not the very question before us, in fact, a question of experience?" Could all men have believed in a Trinity, if, as Dr. Dewey contends, an original and fundamental law of the mind forbade their believing it? Nor can we allow ourselves to be charged with professing what we cannot believe, in this case, any more than we demand of Dr. Dewey to allow it in the other. Too many ages have rolled over the Catholic belief, too many libraries have defended it, too many prayers have involved it, and too many martyrs have died for it, to leave any speciousness in the allegation that it cannot be embraced intelligently and sincerely.

The extraordinary assumption just considered is of a piece with the whole character of the denial of the truth in this particular. It is throughout a resistance of Divine testimony by the pride of intellect. And we cannot do better than to close this portion of our strictures in the words of that noble Puritan, John Howe. "To conclude, I only wish these things might be considered and discoursed with less confidence and peremptory determination, with a greater awe of what is divine and sacred. I generally blame it in the Socinians (who appear otherwise

rational and considering men) that they seem to have formed their belief of things, not possible to be known but by the scriptures, without them; and then think they are, by all imaginable arts, and they care not what violence (as Socinus himself hath in effect confessed) to mould and form them according to their preconceived sense."

The doctrine of Atonement is the next in order. Upon this part of the work, we have two general remarks to offer. First that the essay contains scarcely any thing upon what is usually understood by its title; and secondly, from the very low platform which the author occupies, he nevertheless gains some views which are true and enlivening, and which being expressed in his terse and felicitous way, show that the twilight of his system is occasionally broken by a borrowed ray. This is only a new proof, that in theology, as in physics, there may be a penumbra of partial truth, around the portion of total darkness. In opening his essay, the author admits, concerning our Lord, "that the grandest revelation of his character and purpose was made on the Cross." This is true in several senses, but in one sense it is as true of Socrates or of Curtius. Remembering that this is professedly a controversial work, we are scarcely prepared for the declaration, that the author will not attempt to engage the reader's mind "in the ordinary course of a *doctrinal* discussion." Yet a doctrinal discussion is precisely that which he is bound to furnish, since it is doctrine which he has undertaken to discuss. This retreat from the arena of argument into the coloured mists of beautiful sentimentality, is not fitted to beget confidence. But he proceeds. "I cannot discuss this solemn theme in a merely metaphysical manner. I cannot contemplate a death, and least of all the death of the Saviour, only as a doctrine. It is to me, I must confess, altogether another kind of influence. It is to me, if it is any thing, power and grandeur; it is something that rivets my eye and heart; it is a theme of admiration and spiritual sympathy; it leads me to meditation, not to metaphysics; it is as a majestic example, a moving testimony, a dread sacrifice, that I must contemplate it. I see in it a death-blow to sin; I hear the pleading of the crucified One for truth and salvation, beneath the darkened heavens and amidst the shuddering earth!"

Here we are authorized to say, that the Unitarian has no right to speak thus; to charge upon Catholic Christianity all the cold-

ness of scholastic dispute, and to arrogate to himself all the tenderness and awe of holy affection. Most gladly would we rest the whole debate on a fair comparison of the two parties, in respect to the single question of the manner in which they have represented the death of Christ. And it is unbecoming, to say the least, for any one to affect exclusive solemnity and love, in the presence of such Trinitarian writers as Baxter, Leighton, Rutherford, Pascal, and Brainerd.

Hereupon follows a passage, somewhat juvenile in point of taste, and we must not say what, in point of logic; in which the author speaks in florid and elaborate terms, of "a death" being "made a dogma;" of "blood" being "taken to write a creed;" of "martyrdoms wrought into sharp and reproachful metaphysics." After plucking away these prettinesses, which would be brilliant in an album, we discern no residuum requiring notice. We ask too much, perhaps, when we require distinct propositions of truth, in a treatise which disclaims doctrinal discussion; and in the absence of these, reply is scarcely possible. Here and there we almost catch the meaning, but even then it is chiefly negative. Thus, using language of Calvary, which would come forcibly from catholic lips, he says: "I see that that ignominy is glory; that those wounds are fountains of healing!" True, but how—in what sense? The genuine, direct, and honest reply would be—only as an example. Again: "The death of Jesus is the life of the world;" again it is true; but every thing depends on the sense in which it is true.

Relenting, it should seem, in some degree, as it regards "doctrinal discussion," our author proceeds to say something on "the theory of the atonement." Two leading views, he tells us, divide the Christian world. "The one regards it as an expedient, the other as a manifestation." According to the former, "it is some new element, or some new expedient introduced into the divine government, without which it is impossible to obtain forgiveness." Though these are not expressions with which we are satisfied, they do not offend us by any unfairness. The second view is the one which the author adopts; "and certainly," he adds, with a significancy which carries an edge towards a well-known school of American opinion, "many of the more modern orthodox explanations come to the same thing." The interpretation of the scriptural passages on atonement, "is per-

plexed by the reasonings of the apostles about the relations of Jews and Gentiles, by analogies to the Jewish sacrifices, by the language and speculations of olden time." We can well conceive the perplexity of any interpreter, who endeavours to reconcile these relations and sacrifices and this language, with any scheme but that of catholic theology. The attempt which is made to illustrate the scheme of manifestation, by an apologue, is ingenious, but only serves more fully to reduce the whole transaction to the bare influence of a great martyrdom. The whole essay is evidently a sermon, addressed to the most popular apprehensions, and never grappling with the strength of the opposing argument.

The Five Points of Calvinism next engage the attention of our author; if indeed they may not be said to float before his mind from first to last. For he singles out Calvinism as the particular object of his antagonism, and appears to regard it as the opposite pole to his own. We see no just cause for such a method, in a work avowedly defensive, not of anti-calvinism, but of anti-trinitarianism; yet in point of strategy, it is adroitly done, as he thereby gains the sympathy of all the opponents of the doctrines of grace. Nevertheless we do not complain of being regarded as at the very antipodes, in this respect, nor of being placed, as for some ages we have been, "in the forefront of the hottest battle."

We have already adverted to the extraordinary distinction between "election" and "selection." In reviewing what is proposed concerning election and irresistible grace, which the author takes together, we are not more favourably impressed with the acumen of the controvertist. If we were disposed to use rigour, in the interpretation of his words, we should claim him as of our part. But his dread of "doctrinal discussion" and of "metaphysics" is visited on his readers, in the incapacity under which they labour, of discovering his exact intentions. Thus, on the ninety-eighth page, we learn that he believes in personal election; that he regards an "election of communities" as an election of the individuals included; and an "election to privileges" as no more saving human freedom than any other election. To all which we add our subscription. Now let us look at his positive side.

“Let us, then, go to the proposed principle of interpretation, which, I confess, relieves my own mind, and I hope it may other minds.

“I say, then, that *the apostles wrote for their subject*. It is a well established principle among the learned, though too little applied, that the apostles wrote for their age; with particular reference, that is, to the circumstances of their own times. I now maintain, in addition to this, *that they wrote for their subject*. Their subject, their exclusive subject, was religion; and the principles of the divine government, which they apply to *this* subject, may be equally applicable to everything else. Their *not saying*, that these principles have such an application, does not prove that they have not, because they wrote for their subject, and it was not their business to say so. In other words, God's government is infinite; and they speak but of one department of it. His foreknowledge and his influence are unbounded; they speak of this foreknowledge and influence, but in one single respect. But instead of limiting the application of their principles to this one department and this one respect, the inference would rather be, that they are to be extended to everything. And in fact this extension of the principle with regard to election—in one instance, and I believe, only one—is hinted at, where the apostle says, that Christians are “predestinated according to the purpose of him, *who worketh all things, after the counsel of his own will.*” If this be true, then, *everything* is a matter of divine counsel; *everything* is disposed of by election. And men are as much elected to be philosophers, merchants, or inhabitants of this country or that country, as they are elected to be Christians. If this is election, I believe there will be found no difficulty in it; save what exists in that inscrutableness of the subject, which must forbid our expecting ever to fathom it.

“It will be apparent from this view, in what I differ from Calvinists. They make that foreknowledge and purpose of God, which relate to the religious *characters of men*, a peculiarity in the divine government. Connecting the doctrine of election, as they do, with that of special grace, they leave an impression unfavourable to human exertion, and to the divine impartiality. But I maintain, without denying the general difficulties of the subject, that the religious part of the character is no more the result of the divine prescience and purpose, than any other part; and we have no more reason to perplex ourselves with this department of the divine government, than with any other.”—pp. 98, 99.

Every reader familiar with theological treatises, either Romish or Protestant, will at once be struck with the confusion brought into this passage, by neglecting the reasonable and perspicuous distinctions of accredited terminology. By a strange confounding of genus with species, *predestination*, here and elsewhere through the book, is spoken of under the name of *election*. The distinction is not a novel nor a needless one. The author then proceeds to separate himself from the Calvinists, in this respect, that “they make that foreknowledge and purpose of God, which relate to the religious characters of men, a peculiarity in the divine government.” If by this it is meant, as the connexion shows it is meant, that the operations of grace are in any kind or degree *more foreordained* than any the least events, the Cal-

vinist denies the allegation. Men are as much *predestinated* to be philosophers or merchants, as they are predestinated to be Christians; but this latter predestination has been denominated election. It is surely too late in the day for Calvinism to be schooled into the truth, that all events, even the fall of the sparrow and the hair, are objects of divine fore-ordination. These decrees, according to our author, are to be extended to every thing; and so we have ever held and do hold. And therefore, when Dr. Dewey most gravely informs us, that "as no one will expect to be a physician, or a philosopher without study, because he hopes or imagines that he is fore-ordained, or will be supernaturally assisted to gain eminence in these professions; so neither will any similar hope of being a Christian, and being saved, lessen the exertions that are suitable to that end;" he is teaching us that which, for substance, is contained in every defence of Calvinism which was ever made.

Justice requires us to say that Dr. Dewey has treated this subject with decorum. We find it too common, for such Pelagian or Arminian disputants as are worsted in an argument on the decrees, to turn their forces into the channel of reproach and blasphemy and in lieu of the reasons which they have not, to denounce the God of the Calvinists as a demon. From such tactics the present writer is remote. He sometimes does us greivous wrong, but he does even this with the courtesy of a high-bred disputant. Occasionally his line of belief sweeps so near our own orbit as almost to be coincident. Take a single instance:

"Let us now say a word on the doctrine of *the saints' perseverance*. If you separate from this the idea of an irresistible grace, impelling, and, as it were, compelling Christians to persevere in piety and virtue, there is little, perhaps, to object to it. It is so separated in the *present* Orthodox belief, and therefore, it is scarcely a question in controversy. We all believe, that a man, who has become once thoroughly and heartily interested in the true Gospel, doctrine, character and glory of Jesus Christ, is *very* likely to persevere and grow in that interest. I confess that my own conviction on this point is very strong, and scarcely falls short of any language in which the doctrine of perseverance is declared. I can hardly conceive, how a man, who has once fully opened his eyes upon that 'Light,' should ever be willing to close them. And I believe, that in proportion as the Gospel is understood and felt, felt in all its deep fountains of peace and consolation, understood in all its revelations and unfoldings of purity and moral beauty: that in proportion to this, the instances of 'falling away,' whether into infidelity or worldliness, will be more and more rare. I am aware, however, and think it ought to be said, that

the common statements of the doctrine of perseverance are dangerous to the unreflecting and to the speculative. The truth is, that we ought to have nothing to do with perseverance as a doctrine, and everything with it, as a fact. Good men shall persevere : good Christians, above all, shall persevere : but let them remember that they can do so, only by constant watchfulness, endeavour, self-denial, prayer, fidelity." pp. 91, 92.

Leaving this passage to speak for itself, we take occasion to observe that we have met with no opponent of Trinitarianism who is more free than Dr. Dewey, from offensive imputations and unfair statements of his opponents' creed. This we attribute as well to the class of society among which his manners have been formed, as to the moulding influence of elegant letters. We are constrained, however, to say, that he now and then deviates from the line of perfect candour. For example: "Sinners, it was said, had incurred a debt to divine justice; they owed a certain amount of suffering. Jesus Christ undertook, in behalf of the elect, to pay this debt. Now, if he had suffered more, paid more, than was necessary to satisfy this particular demand, there would have been a waste of suffering, a waste of this transferable merit. But there *was* no such waste; the suffering exactly met the demand; and therefore the redemption was *particular*; it was limited to the elect; no others *could* be saved, without *another* atonement. This was, once, *theological reasoning!* And to dispute it, was held to be intolerable presumption. Such presumption severed, for a time, the New England churches from their southern brethren. Such a dispute, with one or two others like it, has rended the Presbyterian Church asunder." It is here insinuated that Christ is held by us to have borne the identical penal suffering due to all the elect; that if more had been destined to be saved, the suffering must have been more; and that this is the old basis of particular redemption. In the name of the whole body of Calvinistic theologians, we pronounce the allegations to be unjust, and historically erroneous. And the remarks of Dr. Dewey have no point, except as against the scattered adherents of the "Gethsemane scheme;" that is, against one Calvinist in a million. The presumption of disputing this putative tenet of ours, we here learn to have been a chief cause of rending asunder the Presbyterian Church. The mildest term which we can employ in regard to this assertion, is that the informants of the author have been grossly ignorant or wilfully calumnious.

Another instance of unfairness occurs in the essay on the nature and extent of Inspiration.

“ But all this proves, say our reviewers, that ‘ in regard to some portions of the Bible, Unitarians no more believe the *ideas* inspired, than they do the words.’ Once more, we ask, do *they* believe in the inspiration of every idea that is contained in the Bible? That is the implication conveyed by their words; but do they believe it? Do they believe that the Psalmist was inspired to say, ‘ O daughter of Babylon, thou art to be destroyed. Happy shall he be, that rewardeth thee, as thou hast served us. Happy shall he be that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones.’ Or when Solomon says, ‘ Be not thou one of them that strike hands, or of them that are sureties for debts,’ do they believe that this injunction was inspired? Or when Paul uses this opprobrious language to the officer who struck him, ‘ God shall smite thee, thou whited wall!’ do they account this to be the fruit of inspiration? ‘ Where,’ says Jerome, speaking of this angry retort, ‘ where is that patience of our Saviour, who, as a lamb led to the slaughter, opened not his mouth, but answered mildly to him that struck him, ‘ If I have spoken ill, convince me of the ill; but if well, why do you strike me!’ p. 287.

To each of the former interrogatories, we answer—doubtless to the surprise of the author—YES. In regard to that which relates to Paul, we can only say, the mode of argumentation is unworthy of Dr. Dewey. We have occasionally met with such taunts in the objections of the Quakers to our calling the scriptures the “ Word of God;” and they have with some triumph demanded whether we applied the name to—“ Thou shalt not surely die;” or “ There is no God.” But Dr. Dewey, a scholar, a theologian, and a son of the pilgrims, knows full well, how, and in what sense, divine inspiration is attributed to such passages; to wit, as inspiration of history, ensuring the accuracy of the statement that such words were uttered by those to whom they are ascribed.

There is a whole class of defensive or deprecatory arguments, occurring here and there in the book, which do not savour of the most adventurous polemics: being so far from particular pungency, as to be equally available for or against any and every system. A more rigid dialectic would omit them, just as like terms are cancelled on both sides of an equation. It is said, for instance, that opposition to anti-trinitarianism is no evidence of its being wrong, p. 118; that the charge of novelty is no refutation, p. 123; that the appeal to pity and horror, does not disprove, and that truth has always made its progress amidst the pity and horror of men; p. 125. All this is equally true, and

equally pertinent, in behalf of Swedenborg, the Mormons, or even the Calvinists. Such objections may have been used incidentally, but they are not the artillery of our fortress; and it will require all the strength of Unitarian argument to deal with the more cogent proofs.

In a work which does not merely state and defend Unitarianism, but attacks Trinitarianism in general, (and even its single species of Calvinism,) we expected some more extended answer to the arguments for the divinity of our Lord. It is a head of theology, not neglected in any system, but above all things appropriate in this. We should have been pleased to know, in what way a mind like that of Dr. Dewey would explain the creatorship of Jesus Christ; how he would justify the titles of godhead, ascribed to him, and how he would vindicate the worship offered to him, in earth and heaven. This is a citadel, into which he has not chosen to make good his entrance. No distinct essay is allotted to the Divinity of Christ.

The mode of attack adopted by the author is wary and expectant. He does not seize the tree by the trunk, to uproot it with main strength, but plucks a twig, breaks a branch, or points out an unsightly and withered leaf, here and there. In the very opening we saw how loth he was to startle any, by rejecting the established terms; and in all the progress, we perceive it as his policy, to pare away the rind, and express the juices of the goodly fruit. A cautious lowering of each several part in the evangelical system, is his chosen endeavour. We have seen this, in regard to the Atonement, and to Future Punishment. The same is true in respect to the Bible; and how singularly do extremes meet, when, with the voice of a Vatican oracle, Dr. Dewey says of the sacred volume, (p. 149,) "that there are considerable portions of it, which cannot be understood without much study," and "that the people at large are reading these continually, and think to derive benefit from them, and do, no doubt, affix to them some vague meaning; but do not and cannot understand them." The same attenuating process is visible in what relates to regeneration and conversion. Our Lord says, 'The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth, so is every one that is born of the Spirit;' but Dr. Dewey says, 'Conversion is no mysterious doctrine;' p. 158. Pressing an unjust analogy, he would

reduce this to the level of any other change, and allow nothing for the truth, that there are reasons, in the ideas of heaven, eternity, and God, why this revolution should transcend common analogies. Justification by faith, under this potent wand, dwindles from that which transported Paul and Luther into holy enthusiasm, to the harmless truism that "the old, the everlasting, the universal condition of happiness and of God's favour here and hereafter"—is "a right heart." That *gospel* which laboured to express itself in the apostolical writings, by metaphors which have vexed the souls of Socinian interpreters, is now reduced to its lowest terms, namely—BE GOOD. The religious life, itself, suffers diminution of its stature, in due proportion, until we arrive at the pleasing result, that "we are a nation of believers;" p. 210.

Can we wonder that such a sinking should take place in the building, when the Corner-Stone is set at nought? "There certainly have been in the world," says Dr. Dewey, "and are, very singular and superstitious feelings concerning Jesus Christ; there is a peculiarity in men's regard to him, of which I do not remember to have seen any explanation attempted. Nothing has been so sacred in religion as the name of Christ; nothing deemed so awful as to profane it; not even to profane the name of God himself." There is a volume of argument implicated in the few periods just quoted. This reverence for Christ is a mystery to our author. We shall only add, it is a mystery which is strangely essential to the New Testament, where Jesus is "a name above every name." But we forget that to our author, the language of an apostle is by no means what it is to us: for he who can believe that a prophet-king may have written wicked imprecations, might as readily look on the raptures of an apostle as idolatrous mistakes.

On the Inspiration of the Scriptures, Dr. Dewey has written more largely, and we think more skilfully, than on any other topic. It is a subject encompassed with many difficulties; and these difficulties he has presented strongly. They are such as have been suggested by all unbelievers in the infallibility of our standard. We look in vain, however, for the positive side of his opinions, and for the reasons which he would employ against avowed Deists, in favour of that measure of divine authority, which we understand him to maintain. Indeed there is a per-

plexing indistinctness about his enunciation of his own views on this point.

We must, before offering a few remarks on his reasoning, ask leave to state the question. It is not whether the individuality of the sacred penman was so superseded, as that the diction and style of the respective writers are not to be discerned. It is not whether the record of the revelation was human, or whether the human faculties acted according to their nature, in writing the record. It is not whether the idiom is classical, or the words grammatically proper, or the rhetorical garb tasteful, in respect to human standards. It is not whether there is not a diversity among the writers, in all these respects. It is not whether there are not obscurities. It is not whether language, as human, is not in such a sense, an imperfect vehicle, as that it may fail to be understood. It is not whether, in this acceptation of the terms, the books are 'perfect and infallible compositions.' Yet it will be observed, that Dr. Dewey reasons almost everywhere, as if these were the very questions. And when he proves any thing, it is one of the points here involved that he proves. On these, it is well known, we may make many concessions, and yet save the main position. But the true question is, *Were the minds of the writers so influenced as to secure them from error, in regard to the thought and the expression of it?*

It is the negative of this, which our author should have proved, and which he sometimes assumes to have proved. From arguments which go only to the points above set aside, he is prone to slide into conclusions which concern the true question.

Dr. Dewey does not even discern the necessity for any such inspiration as we maintain. And in defending his view, he appears to us, to mistake the very end of the influence which is claimed. "What is a revelation?" he asks, "It is simply the communication of certain truths to mankind; truths, indeed, which they could not otherwise have fully understood or satisfactorily determined; but truths nevertheless as easy to be communicated as any other. Why then is there any more need of supernatural assistance in this case, than in any other? We are constantly speaking to one another without any fear of being misunderstood. We are constantly reading books without any of this distrust; and books, too, written by men in every sense fallible, which the Scripture writers, in regard to the revelation

made to them, are not. Nay, we are reading books of abstruse philosophy, in the full confidence that we understand the general doctrines laid down. But the matters of revelation are not abstruse. They are designed to be understood by the mass of mankind." This is to confound the whole matter. We admit that truth may be communicated as easily as falsehood; that doctrines may be comprehended in books of abstruse science; and that the Bible is to be understood by the mass of mankind. But the intent of inspiration, let it never be forgotten, is to secure, not *perspicuity*, but *credibility*. The propositions may be understood without inspiration, but are they true? Why, he asks, any more need of supernatural assistance in this case, than in any other? Because this is a case of life and death, and the salvation of our souls depends on truth. Because to answer the ends of a divine guide, the book must be not only clear, but infallible.

The author asks, 'How shall we know what is true and what is false; what belonged to the age, and what to the light?' And, after all his reply, we must reiterate the question, How? There can be no doubt, he says, about matters of morality and duty. Indeed there are grave doubts about these very matters; as Dr. Dewey may be reminded by the bare words, War and Peace, Intemperance, Slavery, Usury, and Oaths. But there are other things necessary, beyond morality and duty. For example, we would not merely hear but *know*, how the soul shall fare hereafter, and how a sinner may be just with God. It is not accurate in Dr. Dewey, to say that few deny the sanctions of future existence; to deny their eternity, is to deny them. And when, in the same paragraph, he goes aside to allege, that every appeal to reason is a waving of all claim to inspiration; we offer it for his pondering, that there may be *inspired argument*, nay, that an infallible teacher may argue, for Jehovah himself reasons.

There is a total shifting of the hypothesis when the author opposes us thus: "We would place ourselves reverently before the shrine, not to call in question its form, or the materials of which it is composed, but to listen to the voice that proceeds from it. We would listen to the oracle, not to criticise the tone in which it speaks, but to gather the import of what it utters. Let us drink of 'the waters of life,' and we complain not if they are brought to us in 'earthen vessels.'" The same fallacy over

again. For the question of questions, with which our souls yearn, and which requires an inspiration, is, "Is that which it utters, *truth*? Is it the water of life, which is in the earthen vessel?"

There are certain arguments of Dr. Dewey, which, as we have hinted, address themselves to the answer of this very question, and where we are fairly at issue with him: these however are much intermingled with others, which concern only the subordinate topic of verbal suggestion. How low his views are may be learned from his saying: "We see no need of supposing the apostles, for instance, to have spoken and written under any other influence than that of truth and goodness; *truth supernaturally communicated to them, but not by them supernaturally taught.*" Here, as we conceive, all is given up. The Bible is no longer a bible. It matters little to us, what the apostles received, unless we are assured that it is the same that they have communicated. To ask this assurance, Dr. Dewey thinks as unreasonable, as to demand that Paul's speech should have no infirmity, or his style no imperfections, or his doctrine no obscurity. The old fallacy! For the question is not, are the words and style of such or such a quality, but is the communication true? And to speak right plainly, Dr. Dewey contends that, in some of its parts, it is *not* true.

Here we think the point in dispute is really touched, and here we certainly desire to set forth our author's scheme in its true light. "The thought came pure from the All-revealing Mind; but when it entered the mind of a prophet or apostle, it became a human conception." Certainly, inasmuch as that which God communicated was now conceived of by a human being. But did it become less pure, or less true? For if it did not, the remark is of no advantage to the author; and if it did, he believes that the communication is in some of its parts untrue. He then goes off indeed, to the subject of style, but we choose rather to abide by the point, proceeding to what he says concerning the Mosaic astronomy and physics. If the statements of the Old Testament, here alluded to, are uninspired, because they militate against modern discoveries, they are, for the same reason, untrue. It cannot be denied, he asserts, that there are some slight discrepancies in the evangelical narratives. One or more of these narratives, therefore, must be, at least, slightly untrue. "Christ

suffered his disciples to err," we are informed; plainly in order to shew that they may have erred in their writings. He admits indeed, that "there is a communication from heaven;" but this loses all its authority, when we are further informed, that it may be nullified or corrupted by erroneous transmission.

Analogous to this is the fearful tenet, that holy men of old, inspired by the Holy Ghost, may not only have erred in doctrine, but may have sinned in temper while they wrote. The instances given are from the imprecations in the Psalms. "Our reverence" says Dr. Dewey, "for the Psalmist is great; but we cannot be blind to the imperfection of such a passage as that which we have cited." And again, "Indeed there is no defence to be made of this passage." This is frank declaration. Similar language may be found in the Rev. Albert Barnes's Commentary on the eleventh chapter of Romans. It has our unqualified condemnation, as undermining the very basis of our faith. To be of any value in extremity, inspiration must be plenary. To prove at large, that it is so, is not the special object of this article, and would protract our review beyond all just limits. It has been ably done, and there is no argument which we should more gladly attempt, in other circumstances.

Since Dr. Dewey has dwelt so much upon the subject of verbal inspiration, we cannot leave it altogether untouched. We perceive at once that his views of the connexion between thought and language are widely different from ours. That connexion we hold to be most intimate. Language is created by thought. Conception makes use of words, as its implement, and shapes them for its vehicle. "The style is the thought." It is not to be expected therefore that we should readily yield all that our opponent claims as concessions, and on which he founds his main argument. Nor are we moved by the latitudinarian concessions of such men as Erasmus, Grotius, and Le Clerc. To secure the ends of a revelation, its due transmission *to us* must be secured. The care which provides the thought in the prophet's mind must provide the means of its expression. As we cannot think without some intervention of words, so we cannot receive an unadulterated record of inspiration without the right words. We have therefore no such difficulty as the author fancies, in ascribing the very language of scripture to inspiration. We do this, without conceiving of a conveyance to the ear by whispered

syllables, or any superseding of the natural processes: it is enough for us to be assured, that the words which are in the text are the very words which God determined should be the medium of his communication. Nor does this obliterate distinctions of style, or of idiom, or of natural individuality. Where has it been demonstrated, that God may not inspire a man to write in his own style, as well as in his own language? Nor does it render necessary technical accordance with any canons of human rhetoric; for such accordance is not demanded by the *design*, namely, exemption from faults which affect the truth. Nor does it demand any unattainable perfection in language, as our author argues; since we do not pretend, that the writing of men under God's dictation shall command the instant submission of every mind, any more than did the writing of God himself upon the tables of stone. And all the reasons alleged to show the impossibility of inspiration, from the inherent defects of language, are equally strong to prove that God cannot make himself understood in a revelation.

"The scriptures themselves furnish as little warrant for the doctrine of superintendence as for that of suggestion:" so speaks our author, and we agree that the cases are on a level as to proof; but we believe in both in their respective places. And we are so far from being driven to desperation by his mention of "puerility, coarseness and indelicacy" in the records of an unsophisticated age, when genuine virtue had not been bartered away for fastidiousness of expression, that we firmly hold our faith even in the midst of these appeals to vulgar delicacy. "What the advocates of a literal and suggesting inspiration are to do with such instances," it passes the comprehension of Dr. Dewey to devise. Certainly we shall not expurgate them from monuments of hoary antiquity. Nor are we yet ready to tremble at the dire menace, in case we offer the "defence of such passages" that we must stand "before the searching and free spirit of this age;" seeing that we write as expecting to stand before the more searching spirit of a higher tribunal. We see no tenable middle ground between deism and the strict theory of full inspiration.

Dr. Dewey cannot leave the field until he has run a tilt against what he is pleased to denominate "Calvinistic Views of Moral Philosophy." Dr. Wardlaw is able to answer for himself.

The author's wonted suavity forsakes him in this final encounter, and the closing paragraphs are the most ill-natured in the book. The spirit of the whole may be inferred from the penultimate sentence, in relation to our creed: "He who shall grow sleek and fat, and look fair and bright, in a prison, from which his companions were taken one by one, day by day, to the scaffold and the gibbet, could make a far, far better plea for himself than a good man living and thriving in this dungeon-world, and believing that thousands and thousands of his fellow-prisoners are dropping daily into everlasting burnings."

We cannot dismiss these flings at Calvinism, without alluding to one which is somewhat extraordinary. Dr. Dewey asks with an air of triumph what Calvinism has done. "We ask not," for we desire to quote his own words, "what *Calvinists* have done. For, allowing individuals among them all deserved credit for genius and accomplishments, it is very remarkable, that in the exertion of their powers in the chosen departments of genius, they have proved traitors to their system! That is to say, the tone of religious thought and sentiment introduced into such works has never been that of Calvinism. We ask, then, What has Calvinism done? What literature has ever breathed its spirit, or ever will? What poem has it written—but Mr. Pollock's 'Course of Time?' What philosophy—but Dr. Wardlaw's? Into what meditations of genius or reveries of imagination, but those of John Bunyan, has it ever breathed its soul?"

On taking breath after the perusal of this assault which, dainty as it is, approaches more near to manly vehemence than many passages in the volume, we felt a measure of complacency in considering, that it is not we who proposed such a test. And we desire to know of our adversary, when and how and by whom it was established, that the genius of a literature is the criterion of theological truth. By what right has the Unitarian decreed that elegant letters are the signs of divine doctrine; and that the seal of a heavenly mission is to be like that of Aaron, whose rod blossomed into flowers? Calvinism is weighed in the balances and found wanting. "What poem has it written?" The true *lapis Lydius* has now been discovered. Calvinism has indeed been a "burdensome stone" for more than ten generations to the impugnors of grace. It has stood in the van of the army of the Reformation. It has cloven down the scholastic chivalry of

Britain and of France, and made the name of the Covenanter and the Huguenot to tingle in the ears of a thousand enemies. It has reared munitions of philosophical and logical research, at which opponents are still labouring in vain. It steeled the hearts and nerved the arms of those non-conformist pilgrims, whose sons are now raising up that which was the abomination of the fathers. But alas! "what poem has it written?" Calvinism gave their indomitable valour to Coligny and to Knox. Calvinism stilled to holy fortitude the mothers and daughters of *one* bloody Bartholomew's day, and the two thousand who went forth into exile for conscience sake on *another*. Calvinism chartered the May-flower. Calvinism laid out the plot of Boston. Calvinism founded that Harvard college which is now held by perversion of those ancient earnings, and whose sons now deride the hopes of those founders. But "what *poem* has it written?" True, it has made philanthropists, like Howard, of whose system of thought it was the very life. It has spread its missionaries over every land, and penetrated arctic and tropical dangers, while the dapper, literary, exquisite, clergy of liberal Christianity have been dreaming in luxurious apathy. But from every boarding-school, we seem to hear the indignant and unanswerable query, "*What poem has it written?*" Suppose it had written no poem: does that demonstrate its falsity, any more than the same is argued of Socinianism, because Socinianism has produced no sculpture, reared no Parthenon, and propelled no steam-car? Again we say we are comforted that the criterion is not of our choosing.

But if we must a little further pull to pieces this flimsiest of gossamer, we would fain know by what subtle discrimination our author has arrived at this convenient distinction between Calvinists and Calvinism. "We ask not what Calvinists have done:" we ask (such is the apodosis needful to the sense) What has Calvinism done? Bunyan, indeed, by a happy afterthought, is included in a special exception: perhaps if it had suited the trimness of the period, the author's pen might have added COWPER. But of these "individuals," acknowledged even "among them" (nempe Calvinists) to have "genius and accomplishments," by what principle does he so adroitly exclude their Calvinism from all share in the product? And when the multitudinous array, doubtless known to the author, but not yet

revealed to us, of immortal bards among Socinians shall be drawn out before our wondering eyes, why, we demand, may we not in like manner claim "that the tone of religious thought and sentiment introduced" by them, has not been Socinianism? We have said not a word of John Milton, because, while the *Paradise Lost* is claimed by anti-trinitarians, it may be equally claimed by Materialists, Anthropomorphites, and Polygamists: as all may equally found their demands on the posthumous "Treatise of Christian Doctrine."

There is a class, we would believe that Dr. Dewey does not write down to their capacities, who by *literature* understand a certain something, too feeble to grow into science, and too nebulous to consolidate into system. It is the ambrosia of the boarding-school, the magazine, and (*sit venia verbo*) sometimes the sermon. Dear, delightful literature! as necessary in the soirée, as the latest moustache from abroad, or the most exquisite confections and music. It is now all Italian, now all German. It immortalizes itself in the fugitive verses, set forth in certain latitudes, with and without pictures, and lacquered or gilt covers, "thick as leaves in Vallombrosa." Of such literature, we own, Calvinism claims no paternity. But in that larger, nobler, older sense, in which the *bonae literae* were allowed to comprise the high argument of Plato and Tully, or even the soaring imaginations of Jeremy Taylor and John Howe, we challenge for Calvinism a glory, which shall stand as long as the last pyramid. For the great and awful lineaments of Hall, of Chalmers, of Saurin, of Claude, of Edwards, of Owen, yea, of the sad but unterrified and unequalled John Calvin, look down upon us from the panels of our time-honoured castle, not as (as Dr. Dewey sneers) like a "dark and antiquated hatchment on the wall, the emblem of a life passed away," but as portraiture of those whose life is still vigorous in the thoughts of men, and whose invincible armour still triumphs by means of the very logic they forged, for the conflict which we wage in their stead.

Perhaps we speak warmly; but is there not a cause? Let it be considered in what terms that system is derided and maligned, by which our fathers lived and in which they died, as we also would live and die: a system "which wears no form of beauty that ever art or imagination devised;" "a system whose frowning features the world cannot and will not endure; whose theo-

retical inhumanity and inhospitality few of its advocates can ever learn; whose tenets are not, as all tenets should be, better but worse, a thousand times worse, than the men who embrace them; whose principles falsify all history and all experience, and throw dishonour upon all earthly heroism and magnanimity!" Hear it ye mighty shades of those who manned the walls of Calvinistic Geneva! Ye who dyed the fields of France with martyrs' blood; ye men of the Covenant, who fell at Bothwell bridge; ye slaughtered saints whose bones lay "scattered on the Alpine mountains cold,"

"Slain by the bloody Piemontese that rolled
Mother with infant down the rocks."

Nay, hear it, ye living freemen of Scotland, urging your way onward against a torrent of rebuke and opposition, that the Calvinism for which you suffer these things, falsifies all history and all experience, and throws dishonour upon all earthly heroism and magnanimity! But we have dwelt too long on the ungracious task of exposing what is after all the unreasoning clamour of a fanatical misrepresentation.

After charges so grave and criminations so harsh, we claim the right of examining what has been the energy of the anti-trinitarian faith to produce a progressive and heroic Christianity. Has its preaching, more than that of all others, filled and warmed and expanded the souls of hearers, and urged them forward to any semblance of aggressive philanthropy? Have its preachers been so inspired with the greatness of their theme, as above others to count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus? It is too well known, that, in a number of instances, some of its most eloquent champions have found it necessary to transcend even the demarcations between religion and politics, to find excitements for their auditors. It is not two months since we read, in a Unitarian journal, of the performances of a great preacher, in our national metropolis. He ventured, so we read, "to comment upon a wasted and corrupt franchise as one of the greatest of evils." This is one out of many instances, which together show that the genuine interests of the pulpit are in decay. The fact is instructive, as part of their history, that several of their greatest ornaments have not found in the Unitarian ministry, fuel for their excitement, or scope for their powers. We know them as statesmen, as philo-

sophers, and as scholars, and elaim them as adding glory to the American name ; but where are Everett, Sparks, Baneroft, and Palfrey ?

It was the unusual glow of Buekminster and Channing, which, forming an exception to the common style, raised them above their coevals. In referenee to a sermon of the latter, the amiable and accomplished Henry Ware was led to say, in a letter to his father : " It appears to be powerful and impressive beyond example. It must be a treasure to young preachers, and ought to stop effectually the cold sermonizing of your rationalists, who maintain the strange contradiction of religion without feeling. If such a thing were possible, it would be seareely worth having, I think."*

It is not too much to say, that there is an anxious sense of something like languor and inefficiency, in the midst of the Unitarian body itself. The attempt to inject into the enfeebled circulation some of the hot blood of German pantheism, has well nigh brought on a erisis, if not that worst of monsters, a CREED. They who have long considered themselves as standing in the very Thermopylae of religious freedom, are fain to declare, of Mr. Parker, that in the judgment of most Unitarians, he " has proclaimed opinions, which *not only cut him off from our sympathy and body, but from Christianity itself.*"† Yet this yearning for the transeendental is but a reaction against the coldness and ennui of a lifeless religion.

How far the spirit of progress is animating the mass, especially to propagate their opinions among men, may be fairly gathered from the remarks made at the regular autumnal Convention of the Unitarian Denomination, held last October in Philadelphia. We do not augur great consciousness of vitality, from blandishments which passed so profusely, at the opening of that convention, between its members and the heterodox portion of the Society of Friends ; any more than from the previous and analogous invitations toward union with the Christian body. In the course of the proceedings, we meet with more unequivocal tokens of a persuasion, that something is wrong, and with such marks of healthful Christianity set forth, as cannot be applied to their churches with any complacency. " Such a thing," said the

* Memoir of Henry Ware, Jr., vol. I. p. 52.

† The Christian Inquirer, Vol. I. p. 14.

Rev. Mr. Briggs, "as a church having no interest in missions was an anomaly in the apostles' days. Every prayer is a mockery in those who are not solicitous to spread the gospel." He thought "that we had not given that attention to the subject that it required." "We have not sent our missionaries to the waste places of Zion."* The Rev. Mr. Bellows, a man of unusual learning, candour, and dignity, is reported to have said: "We are called, as a denomination, to exert ourselves for the spread of the Gospel, in its reality, simplicity, and practical power. The world will judge us, as it has full right to do, by our fidelity to this test."† But Mr. Hill, of Worcester, admitted that they "had not done much for the conversion of the heathen."‡

Of the character and spirit of religion in the churches, the testimony was not more cheering. Lest we may have misapprehended the singular remarks of Mr. Hedge, of Bangor, we shall give a portion of them *in extenso*. "Rev. Mr. Hedge, of Bangor, said, that brother Lathrop had remarked, that it was easier to procure money for political purposes, than for religious ones. Why is it so? Is it not because men see a reality in politics, a present, living and life-warm reality in the objects for which their contributions are sought? and because they do not see this in religion? Mr. H. thought we erred very much, in taking Christianity and religion out of the sphere of common life. We thus take all blood out of it. When Jesus, after his resurrection, appeared as a spirit to his disciples, they were all afraid of him. Men are still affrighted for the same reason, because Christ is presented to them as a ghost. Religion has none of the blood of daily life in it. It is not of a piece with great nature. Our theology and religious action, how unreal and hollow they are! We use phraseology which once had a meaning, but which no longer has. The reality has gone out of the words and forms which we insist on still using. Thus the phrase, 'the saving of souls,' which his brother from St. Louis had used, was so indefinite and misleading a phrase, as to be responsible for much of the ignorance that prevailed relative to the aims and purposes of the Gospel towards man. What an indefinite, hollow, and unmeaning phrase it is! and how much is the real truth once contained in it, lost sight of, for those very words' sake.

* The Christian Inquirer, Vol. I. p. 11. † *Ib.* page 10. ‡ *Ib.* page 10.

How ghastly is the view of Christ, presented by our preaching ! he is not a man, but a spectre."

It would be a hypocritical affectation, if we were to say that we lament these symptoms of decay, in a system which we religiously esteem to be both anti-scriptural and dangerous: yet we would not insult over the miscarriages even of a cause which we do not approve. From such indications, the argument is good against all claims of sole propriety in that which is fruitful, heroic, and magnanimous. And the evil is inherent. The vital principles have been eliminated. Separate American Unitarianism from certain adventitious aids; from the diverted endowments of Cambridge, from the scholarship of its sons, and from the prestige of elegant society and social rank, and it becomes a stationary and deliquescent mass. Upon the common mind of the nation, it has not made, nor will it ever make an impression. The more its banner is unfurled, the less does its phalanx press onward. Its day of strength was when it was not revealed; "when the Unitarianism of New England (we use the words of Mr. Furness) was in its extreme infancy; when it was too tender to be brought out into the open air; before it had been baptized, *when it was afraid of its name.*"* It has a Theological Seminary in Pennsylvania: but how many churches? Wealth and art may give noble architecture and subduing music; but architecture and music cannot fill the vaulted house with ardent worshippers. Having thrown away that which draws and melts the heart of the people, it needs beyond all religious bodies upon earth, the succedaneum of vestments, incense, processions, statuary, and painting. In default of these, the easy grace and balanced melody of classical essays, though read with every intonation of art, will not cheer the dulness of an afternoon-service. The elements of Christian eloquence have been alienated. The fervour even of their noblest preachers is rather moon-light than day. Dread of systematic discussion has excluded the great source of intellectual excitement, even as felt by common minds, which love the ardency of argumentation. Similar causes have led their writers to sacrifice science to what is called literature, and energy to correctness. Great as is our abhorrence of certain errors in the Church of Rome, we never recur to the pages

* The Christian Inquirer, Vol I. p. 9.

of Bourdaloue, Massillon, or Bossuet, without some elevation and perhaps some transport. But who can thus feel, under the most symmetrical and faultless of Unitarian discourses? And with what hope can the system be expected ever to produce, in respect to pathos, fire, and sacred urgency, a Chalmers, a Tholuck, or a Monod?

These observations we do not apply, in their strictness, to the work before us, which in character is didactic, and therefore subdued in its tone. Yet several, if not most, of these discourses were pronounced from the pulpit. Perhaps we should do no injustice to the author, if we should take them as specimens of his public ministrations. They are, to an extraordinary degree, exempt from every vulgar fault; classic in the purity of the English diction, and alike free from harshness and obscurity. They abound in passages which evince a taste cultivated even to fastidiousness. But these, after all, are negative virtues. There is a marked absence as well of rapid, trenchant, irresistible ratiocination, as of vehement and passionate entrance to the strong-holds of the heart. It is the reigning and characteristic evil of the system itself.

It is high time for us to remember, that we have sat down to write a critique, and not a book. Several portions of the volume before us yet remain untouched. Our readers could not be relied on for patience equal to a longer train of observation, at this time. We have not willingly misrepresented the author. But our admiration of his system has not been increased by his labours. They have resulted in no misgiving, as to the foundation or the defences of catholic Christianity. "Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces, that ye may tell it to the generation following. For this God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide, even unto death."

ART. II.—*Baptism in its mode and subjects*, by Alexander Carson, LL.D., minister of the gospel: with a sketch of his life by John Young. First American edition. Philadelphia. American Baptist Board of Publication. 1845. pp. 502.