

THE
BIBLICAL REPERTORY
AND
THEOLOGICAL REVIEW.

OCTOBER, 1831.

ART. I.—BIBLICAL ELOQUENCE AND POETRY.

SACRED Poetry and sacred Rhetoric have both shared, but too largely, in that inheritance from the heathen classics which has at once so enriched and corrupted the literature of Christian nations. The inspired volume *alone*, in its *original* and divine perfection, remains incorrupt and unmarred. Its poets and orators alone are found guiltless of idolatry, of flattery, of selfishness, of disingenuousness, or vain-glory. Whether by their antiquity, the peculiar customs and exclusive laws of their country, their unlettered condition, or solely and directly by the Holy Ghost, they were all secured from those fascinations of a foreign style and false philosophy, and an impure mythological fancy, which so often bewilder and betray those who essay to catch their spirit and execute their purposes. Even those devout and venerable "Fathers" who learned sacred eloquence from inspired lips, and employed its powers in a cause as sacred, are too often found like magnanimous, but unwary physicians, inhaling death while giving life; or like generous conquerors of a barbarous land, conferring liberty and peace, but catching tyranny and war, teaching truth, but learning error, imparting the gifts and graces of heavenly wisdom and Christian love, themselves, while, too often lingering in wistful meditation beneath the unhallowed shades of Academus, or dwelling in unguarded speculation on the storied

Spirit in regeneration, than of much bread or much wine, to show forth the death of Christ. Besides, if the advocates for dipping are so precise, as to require that the ordinance be performed in this mode only, they should be able to show us how the immersion ought to be performed; whether in a river, or in stagnant water; with the face turned upward or downward; three times, as ecclesiastical history informs us was done in the ancient Church, or only once. In all these respects different modes are practicable, and it does not appear why they are not as important as the circumstance of covering the body entirely with water by immersion.

We therefore, think, that when this matter shall be impartially considered, and well understood, we shall have no further controversy about the mode of baptism; except to insist that it be with water, by an authorized minister, and in the name of the Trinity.

ART. III.—REPLY OF DR. COX.

To the Editors of the Biblical Repertory.

RESPECTED BRETHREN:

AN apology is perhaps due to you and your readers, for attempting a reply, to your review of my sermon, contained in your number for April, 1830, at this late period. I will tell the truth, whether it become my apology or accusation. At that time I was so employed with parochial cares, as well as the general business of the cause in which we are in common engaged, that after a cursory glancing at what it pleased you to say, I laid the number aside, till a less hurried interval might furnish me with the opportunity of doing some justice to it. I was well aware that a matter so interesting, so absorbing indeed in its intrinsic importance as I view it, would not brook to be lightly despatched; and could not be suffered to assert its own gravity, without pressing out certain duties that justly claimed the precedency. Accordingly, I have never read your review till this same month of August, 1831, and am too straitened now for time adequate to the occasion. If this appear strange, the solution is a glorious one: I have been more and more engrossed as a christian pastor in home duties. Souls, literally by hundreds, have, within the year,

been hopefully born again, in the midst of us, by the power of the Spirit of God. I need not say very expansively, that in my public and private ministrations to them, I have had my eyes open to principles and their discrimination; and that those of passivity have had very little to do with the work, except in some remarkable instances to obstruct and embarrass it, and in others to become a foil to its genuineness and to add splendour to its triumphs.

It is also a preliminary duty, respected brethren, to do you a piece of justice; and I can assure you in this, that while I shall speak your eulogium, I will nothing overstrain my convictions. You may expect sincere tributes only—*veras voces ab imo pectore*. I allude to the very christian manner, the general moderation and dignity of temper, as well as style, which you have happily exemplified as christian controvertists: and this in a matter in which you considered yourselves as “aggrieved,” as well as implicated, in no slight degree. This is the general impression, which the recent perusal of your review has left on my mind; and while I am happy to record it here, I devoutly pray for the grace of the Holy Ghost to preside over my motives and words in this reply, so as in that respect, at least, to give you some similar occasion to “glorify God in me.” My esteem for you is unfeigned. God forbid that any partial influences should ever dim the glories, to my vision, of Catholic Christianity; or disparage the ties of eternity and grace that constitute the fellowship, and emphatically the consanguinity, of those whom the blood of Christ hath ransomed, and his Spirit cleansed! With you, personally, I have no controversy. I can see and enjoy many lovely things in the article referred to, apart from any question as to its mental force, or literary worth, or theological respectability; in all which respects, the performance will be viewed as more palpably its own encomium. I believe, too, that it will do good; and that the whole discussion, if managed in a proper manner, will be very beneficial to a great number. My way is to treat persons, with respect; feelings, with tenderness; principles, as if there were no persons in existence; I mean, of course, with perfect freedom and independence of investigation; and in this shall expect neither to offend, nor be offended.

“*Regeneration and the manner of its occurrence*,” is the title of the sermon reviewed. It was founded on those words of Jesus Christ, which are contained in John v. 24, and which I beg leave here to transcribe, for certain reasons, in the *ipsis-*

sima of inspiration. Ἄμην ἄμην, λεγὼ ὑμῖν, ὅτι ὁ τὸν λόγον μου ἀκούων, καὶ πιστεύων τῷ πεμφαντι με ἔχει ζωὴν αἰώνιον, καὶ εἰς κρίσιν οὐκ ἔρχεται, ἀλλὰ μεταβέβηκεν ἐκ τοῦ θανάτου εἰς τὴν ζωὴν. I invoke the torchlight of these words, lifted high above my path, as I pursue it in the present article! It is of prime importance to keep in view the great elements of the theme, pending its discussion; the quoted words express, almost with geometrical accuracy, as I think, *the thing* which regeneration properly respects. I say this for two reasons; one is that a correct agreement as to what *the thing* is, will greatly aid the controversy, and the other that a certain respected brother, as I have credibly heard, who honours a theological chair of a sister denomination, once (in substance—the words are my own) remarked, to a number of gentlemen, that his prime exception to the sermon was its questionable connexion with the text: for that, said he, contains not the subject; I find no allusion to regeneration there, and wonder why he should have selected it for the occasion.

At this remark I am much surprised. It were to me invaluable, if I could suppose that his own views of the thing were entirely correct. I selected the text, because to me it seemed to show *exactly the thing* that I mean by regeneration; and because it also seemed to show the thing in its essential connexion with the agency of the subject: he *hears* the word of Christ, *believes, has everlasting life, comes not into condemnation* from what moment he is thus initiated; but, in contradistinction to that possibility, *is passed* (or *hath made* the transition, or walked across the line μεταβέβηκεν), *from death unto life*. Let us look at the facts. Certainly he is a regenerated person; and this eventuated instantaneously—though it were sufficiently absurd to allege that “a habit” *could be* induced, implanted, inserted, created, or in any other way brought about, instantaneously. When did he become such? Is that not shown, or touched on, in the text? Was he regenerated first, passively or physically; and then did he address himself to the process of hearing, believing, and so on? I believe, yet with very great conviction, that he was “a new creature,” at that identical moment in which his soul first yielded to the plastic moulds of truth, and took thence their “image and superscription;” in which he first cordially believed, surrendered his cavils or his diffidence, approved the objective array which, through preaching, solicited his mind, and became conciliated to the salvation of the gospel of God; *at that identical moment, sirs*—and not possibly before, for

then he abides in "death," and on the cursed side of the line; and certainly not after, for now he "*hath* everlasting life." He is also, as we all believe, just as certainly one of the elect of God, whose names are all "written in the Book of Life, from the foundation of the world:" hence, I believe, (*Pelagian*, as I have been "slanderously reported,") that God, THE SPIRIT, infallibly executive of his own glorious purposes, is THE AUTHOR OF THE THING there displayed; "according as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him; in love having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved." I have not used Scripture for the sake of being indefinite; and certainly love it better than my own words.

As to *the word* regeneration, it occurs in the total Scripture, (our English version,) only twice: (*παλιγγενεσία* :*) Matt. xix. 28. and Titus iii. 5. and in the latter instance only, respects our subject, unless the improper punctuation of our Bible be allowed in the former; in which case it would certainly prove *the activity* for which we plead. But *the thing*, especially including its necessary implications, occurs there, I had almost said, a million of times. What then, I inquire in turn, could the professor mean, when he said that regeneration is not in the text? That *the word* is not there? Only the *word* is scarcely to be found in the confession of my church or his own. Regeneration occurs, however, in fact and in *act*, wherever and whenever any mortal comes first to love God, to believe in Christ, to humble himself as a sinner, to offer sincere prayer, to worship acceptably, or to do any other spiritual service to which the promise of the covenant extends, and which is found heavenward of the line—palpable to the eye of God—which separates his friends from his enemies. That line exists, certainly; it is drawn metaphysically with such infallible accuracy as to allow no man to stand on it, or to remain long *in transitu*, or to cross it other than instantaneously; although it may be, I think, in some sort approximated for a long time previous to the transition. Perhaps it would be crossed oftener at right angles, with a forward march and a quick step, *ovantibus cœlestibus*, as erst, at midnight, in the

* We have *αναγενναω* twice, and *γενναω* much oftener, the verbal forms, in the New Testament.

prison of Philippi, if we all preached and believed together, that the soul is active in regeneration, and that passivity in this relation is utterly absurd and false. This, my brethren, I believe; and whether I can prove it or not, (and to *convince* men is still another thing,) my plain remarks shall have the commendation of transparency of motive and integrity of conviction, a course of action (for this requires activity also) to which I am not, perhaps, supremely influenced by a love of the praise which I see it everywhere elicits; which I know it deserves, wherever incorruptly exemplified; and which it will best receive before a tribunal where practised cunning and double-dealing chicane will be seen in their meanness and deprecated in their doom. I believe that the most candid, upright, honest being in the universe is—God; that without this, his essential glory were an empty name; and that in its infinitely pure manifestations towards us, he is giving us a glorious standard of action, and consequently of character; saying, “be ye therefore followers of God as dear children, and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour.” Independence of action and of thought results properly from a right sense of individual responsibility.

As this communication purports to be a reply, or rejoinder to your review, so in its process I shall limit my obligations, at least to a vindication, in some sort, of the sermon, without caring, or confessing duty, to meet you in the metaphysical tournament into which you have generalized and amplified your animadversions. Though it might be interesting to some minds of mercurial acuteness, in whom the faculty of consecutive reasoning had been disciplined to excellence, and possibly profitable as it were poetical too, to follow you wherever you have gone;

“Seized in thought,
On fancy’s wild and airy wings to sail
From the green borders of the peopled earth,
And the pale moon her duteous fair attendant,”

to regions of existence without the boundaries of the planetary family to which our globe belongs;

“Far remote,
To the dim confines of eternal night,
To habitudes of vast unpeopled space,
The deserts of creation, wide and wild;
Where embryo systems and unkindled suns
Sleep in the womb of chaos;”

or, prosaically spoken, to go back to Eden with our metaphysics and ascertain all about the origination of evil there; the politics of pandemonium, as connected with its primitive irruption; and thence beyond, in space and time unmeasured, ascending to the disquisition of an insurrection more ancient, celestial, tremendous; and show how sin first ruined angels, and the probable connexion of our views respectively with all the known facts of that original and confounding mutiny of seraphic natures against the King eternal; whatever might be the matter, or the mind of such a rise and towering speculation, I shall not lose my proper sphere, or venture "such pernicious height," whoever may lead or urge me, till I feel prepared for it; even

Ipsa patre meo monstrante viam.

I would here,

I. Offer some animadversions, perhaps desultory in their kind, that have occurred to me in the perusal of your review, intending to return to the subject of regeneration after I have despatched them.

1. On your 266th page, commencing last line, you say; "This view of the doctrine of regeneration, (that it is the production of a holy principle,) he says, can 'command the confidence of no well disciplined mind,' (rather a bold assertion by the way,) and then adds, 'by holy principle *I* mean love to God, &c.'" According to the style in which you have quoted me, your parenthetical reprehension appears very much in place; and the assertion seems not only "bold," but bald and gratuitous. There is no gall in my pen, nothing but ink and kindness; I hope then you will pardon the pleasantry, as mine, when I assure you that, as I read this part of your review *I had a disposition*, tendency, principle, or call it what you will, to recollect what Junius (who *I think* is Horne Tooke) said to Sir William Draper, about the manner in which he was quoted by that nobleman: in substance thus—"Your lordship has made me ridiculous, simply by making me your own." In page 26 of the sermon, are these words: "Perhaps it will be said that God creates or inserts some *holy principle* in us, which constitutes regeneration, and in which we are entirely passive; but that thereafter we actively do our duty. To this quaint statement, I reply, that it can command the confidence of no well disciplined mind, till we have both a definition of what is meant by *holy principle*, and a demonstration of its existence of more importance

than the mere terms of the theory." I then proceed to show what "I mean by holy principle," OBJECTING NOT TO ITS USE OR REALITY, but only to what I deem its philosophical misconception, as a sign in mystified theology of a certain imaginary *tertium quid*, which exists only by illusion—only to confuse and darken the simplicities of religion. Take then the passage as I have given it, and the assertion "that it can command the confidence of no well disciplined mind, TILL we have, &c." becomes not an absolute and gratuitous, but a conditional assertion—and I still abide by it, by moral necessity! I have looked through the fifty pages (almost) of your review, in vain, for the "definition" and the "demonstration" desired: and though you have said many an ingenious, many a plausible, and many a sound and excellent thing, the condition is, I think, not complied with, and of consequence my confidence is not commanded—though nothing desirous to bring the "discipline" of my own mind into question, or its infirmities into notoriety as well as consciousness.

2. I think you have not well divined the scope and bearing of the publication; as an attack on the old school and its Calvinism in general, and *quasi* on Princeton in particular.

Very careful was I to deal in principles absolutely; to discuss them impersonally; to mention no party name; to make no personal or local allusion; to set the truth in contact with error or absurdity, simply for its commendation to our hearts; and to put the propriety of the *qui capit ille facit* impeachment on any person, who should espouse the controversy, not in an absolute way as right or wrong might seem to dictate, but as a party or personal affair.

What right then, my brethren, had you to feel "aggrieved," because I had even "caricatured" some sentiments which you disown? You charge me with misrepresentation. Of whom? Your indictment cannot lie or sustain itself. I utterly deny the propriety of your *appropriation* of the assault in the first instance, and then your militant rejoinder (though benignly conducted) *in just such a way* as would have been sensible and proper, if I had named you. Certain pugnacious characters, (I do not accuse you as such,) in another direction, have said in my ears *totidem verbis*, "you refer to us, sir, as we are well aware; we regard it too as an insult; and feel much aggrieved that you have represented us and *our* church in such a light." I wonder if such persons, including, my brethren, yourselves, have ever read and *weighed*, remembering the conceded "honesty" or common veracity of the wri-

ter, the second paragraph of the introduction to the sermon? There, if I know them, my motives and aims are recorded: and if that *exposé* be sound and correct, I deny that any mortal has a right to feel aggrieved, or to review me as if it were all a personal or partizan affair. You admit that I had no "one class of theologians exclusively in my eye." Yet you have "no doubt" that most of what I stated in synopsis in the introduction, and which you know to include several diverse references, "was intended as an exhibition of the doctrines of the old Calvinists." You have "no doubt"! Where is the evidence of what I "intended?" Apart from this rather gratuitous assumption, you could hardly have felt "aggrieved?" And you assume it, let me say, very improperly—as the basis of almost the whole forty-five pages nearly that succeed! In all these, the general reader thinks and *feels* that you are defending yourselves, and that I am your personal assailant. This is injustice, though you did not mean it. Why not refer simply to such as is true or false? right or wrong? Must I say to you that *teste Deo* I love you, brethren and fathers? that I have no pleasure at all in dishonouring your name or wounding your feelings? that I did not attack you; and though I might have thought perhaps that you could be grieved, I did not think that you would feel 'aggrieved,' at the performance in question? If I were pleading now before the chancery of heaven, I would move for a decision between us, on the question whether the author or the reviewers had more right to feel aggrieved in the whole case? Hence,

3. I must say a word on *the manner in which you investigate*, or rather review the subject. I think it is very exceptional in one superlative respect.

Your whole learned tractate seems forever engaged to adjust the relations between certain positions on the one hand, and certain systems of divinity, authors of old school eminence, and maxims that have received the stamp of orthodoxy in some established mint, on the other. I have been struck with the learned barrenness of your review in respect to scripture authorities and quotations: a verse very seldom occurs; and when it does, it is such a thread of verdure as to constitute not one oasis, little or great, in the magnificent wilderness of your ratiocinations. It always seems, therefore, as if your eye saw no standard of theological truth, or some other than that recommended fundamentally by the standards of our Church, as **THE WORD OF GOD—THE ONLY RULE TO DIRECT US.** I know not why I may not be bold in

Christ affectionately to ask you, to review your review for ten minutes or so, on purpose to see what justice you have done to the volume that gives us all our light. Since I first read church history, and began to sympathize with the heroic spirit of the reformation, I said—first, the scripture is the armoury of their strength and their victories; and second, this love antique and patristical, these councils oecumenical or provincial, these authorities ecclesiastical or philosophical, these pandects and canons and traditionary usages, are like the eumbrous panoply of Saul, the presages of defeat, concerning which every modest Israelitish champion should say, “I cannot go with these.” Owen, Charnock, Bates, Edwards, Bellamy, Dwight! When the sun is up, these stars of the first magnitude are no longer discernible. What do I care *primarily* and *practically*, in investigation of the revealed doctrines of God, for them? for you? for the standards of the Church themselves? or even for the General Assembly? Not a rush! The passion of my soul is simple—What is truth? What has God said? What does he mean? Nor does this imply any thing worse than the *comparative* insignificance of these uninspired oracles. I care, I say, *in primary practice*, as an investigator in theology, *for the word of God as the only rule*; and *COMPARATIVELY* for nothing else in the universe. “O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day. Thou, through thy commandments, hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts.” God shield me from the abhorred servility of being kept or constrained, as a student of his word, by any consideration of a nature conventional, earthly, and of course adverse to evidence! “Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.”

On the subject of creeds and confessions, however, I pray to be here understood. I belong not to the small party that think confessions of faith of no use, symbols of doctrine worthless, and written standards hurtful. I can see evil in them—*only in their abuse*; and for their use and existence, an absolute necessity. Even the no-creed advocates would seem to incline to make *it* an article of faith and a term of communion, converting a negative into a positive by practical necessity: thus, *imprimis*; “no creed is necessary and in fact indispensable.” If one should reply to them, why then do you have *one*; they would perhaps, like the ancient

Pyrrhonists, fly logically to the relief of making their *πρωτον ψευδος*, that no certainty exists, include itself, and say they were not certain of no certainty existing: when asked, if they were certainly not certain, they would answer with the Sadducees, "we cannot tell:" and thus ingloriously retreat from an indefensible and ridiculous position—to indifference; loving all creeds and none equally, in their ecclesiastical practice. Besides, the confession of one's faith is necessary to the existence of church fellowship; and this palpably in the very nature of things. The opposite sentiment is absurd, and contradicted virtually in the preaching and the ecclesiastical administration of its advocates. It is also a scriptural and primitive thing, to exact a confession of his faith from every accredited partaker of christian privileges. "If thou believest with all thy heart thou mayest. If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart, man believeth unto righteousness; (justification;) and with the mouth, confession is made unto salvation." In the original, this last sentence is expressed more abstractly and impersonally, as the law of the house, that meets the visitant *in limine* as the condition of entering; and the word "man" is not there, but simply—it is believed, *πιστευεται*; it is confessed, *ομολογεται*. Still, creeds, like every other lawful and excellent thing, may be abused; and this in many ways; first, by having those that are imperfect, equivocal, wrong; second, by putting too much in them, which is, I think, a fault in ours; third, by making too much of them, implying their apotheosis or the almost image-worship, which idolatrizes in their veneration—a fault that has its exemplification in these days; and fourth, by making too little, or nothing of them. This last fault, I know, is supposed *my** vulnerable place. Like that of Achilles, however, it is in no vital part; though the hero, I remember, was slain by an arrow—from a rival and an enemy—that pierced him there. I can, however, say that my estimate of our Books, as extremes beget each other, is often lower in appearance than in fact. This conduct may not be exemplary or defensible possibly; but it has resulted from the fact, that I have been so often disgusted and wounded with the conduct *a parte altera*, as if it had a commission from Christ to take the consciences

* I should prefer impersonal forms or plural pronouns throughout—but feel bound in this document, to meet an individual responsibility and speak not for others, but myself.

of others, its perfect ecclesiastical and constitutional peers, into its own special custody; as if the fabric of heaven and earth would fall, unless *they* held it up; as if themselves were the chancellors who could *ad libitum* fix upon us, and our house, the attainder of perjury: and all this, without the moral courage and consistency, in honour of the lauded constitution of the Church, of resorting to its ample and righteous prerogatives for the proper correction or the necessary redress. For one, I am ready, *constitutionally, and in no other way*, to be tried at any time, on any point, and at the suit of any competent prosecutor! But precious little respect do I entertain, either for the moral manhood or the conscience of those libellers—*apparent rari*—who covertly, or at a safe distance, throw out their irresponsible charges against the orthodoxy of those, whom they want the virtue to implead where they *can* answer them:

————— quaeque miserrima vidi!

I have hence cared less to advocate our Book, *teste Deo*, in the presence of its officious friends, than its infidel enemies; and the reputation of its champion I have never stooped to some easy methods to acquire—but have rather sincerely despised them. When, therefore, I see any of those symptoms of offence to which I have alluded, I feel calmly as if they ought to be rebuked with decision, or punished with disdain. I forbear to adduce some noted instances of the sort, which I have not unrecently witnessed with ineffable chagrin or ingenuous pity. It is marvellous that politicians should forget that every man has eyes; or that sages do not know at least what is *not* the way to achieve their own cause or commend their sentiments. I could wonder at it, if it were morally possible for my charity always to suppose that their motives were as pure as they vaunt them. Concerning the symbols of our Church, I will say that I absolutely think they contain substantively “the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures;” that I love to read them, have read them often, and perhaps never, without profit: that I think them in many respects admirable, and even glorious—especially as made two centuries ago, in the troublous reign of the unfortunate first Charles, when the Confession, Catechisms, and Directory, appeared as day-stars auspicious in an age of confusion and storms; and when, from the recent night of popery, the rising exhalations of the morning of the Reformation made the air disastrous and the light equivocal. We must not, however, ac-

cuse them of perfection, or even mistake them for the word of God. This were to contradict themselves—to violate the essential and exemplary modesty of their character: and the idea of the obligation of uniformity, in ALL the details and specifications there laid down, on peril of heresy or schism or perjury—

Is tramontane and stumbles all belief!

If any mortal in a deliberative body, would peril himself by taking that position in regular debate, I should like to be there, (and this in general is what I dislike,) for the purpose of empaling him with a hundred questions, which *I* could answer: but which, answered on his principle, would rive all parties *inter se*; dissipate any ecclesiastical organization that ever existed; and if I mistake not, rend into shreds the unity of ANY LEARNED TRIUMVIRATE of old school worthies, of which our Church can boast, or who make their boast of her. Many other things might be said in the premises; but this episode is already too protracted.

The excellent authors previously named, I revere with you: but think them marvellously preferred to Luke, John, and Paul, in your review. I have read them all, possess them, love them, Charnock, in nine noble octavos, has been a valued companion of my study for fourteen years: and of him and the others, I remark—that they are of no authority at all in the question, *what is the truth about regeneration?* and that if they were, I could *prove both sides* of the question of activity, just as well as either, from their writings—any one of them! Take a specimen; one on either side of the Atlantic, and from modern, as well as more ancient days, or rather from the seventeenth, as well as the eighteenth, century: though what you have quoted so liberally proves for me that every now and then *they believed that the subject was active in regeneration*; just as every other man of sense occasionally does! There are few excellent sentences, in any practical sermon extant, that are not based upon this principle, or that do not fairly imply it. Charnock says the divine agency extends “to good actions, not by compelling, but sweetly inclining, and determining the will; so that it doth that willingly, which, by an unknown and unseen necessity, cannot be omitted. It constrains not a man to good against his will, but powerfully moves the will to do that by consent which God hath determined shall be done.” This is what we all believe—New Haven and Auburn! His *tertium quid* is well forgot just here; and orthodoxy does not appear detruncated of her

virtues or her charms. List Edwards:—who deals in *substratum* sometimes in a style far different; and in which (vide what you have quoted) he does not, as here, state *the very doctrine* of my sermon: I could adduce many other and similar quotations from him; “In efficacious grace we are not merely passive, nor yet does God do some, and we do the rest. But God does all, and we do all. God produces all, and we act all. For that is what he produces, viz. our own acts. God is the only proper author and fountain; we only are the proper actors. We are, in different respects, wholly passive and wholly active.” In what respects we are, (namely, relative or subjective,) I have shown in the introduction to the sermon, p. 4. It matters nothing that elsewhere he teaches what I think metaphysically a different doctrine. I take my choice, and use excerpts, where the *genera diversa* bestrew the fields of uninspired divinity. But ten thousand such quotations would convince no one; indeed not even approximate the settling of the question. “Thy word is truth”; and what “well disciplined mind” can rest short of its ascertained sense and sanction? This, I judge, is much *the criterion* of a mind well disciplined in theology, and in the doctrine of evidence.

But you are afraid that the “shreds of Calvinism” will diverge in thin air, if my views obtain: well! let them go. “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. The word of the Lord endureth forever.” But truly I do not sympathize in the principle of your fears. What! are the “things unseen and eternal,” which are the great archetypes of the system, about to fall to pieces or rush from their celestial fastnesses? Are the things, as I believe them, *inter se pugnancia*, incompatible with their common existence? Is their doctrine in my hand self-destructive? Or have I taken away the *nexus* of their unity? Look at Edwards, who has done it just as much in the quotation adduced, and in numerous other places. But in truth I have done no such thing. Your *nexus* is that ineffable SOMETHING, by retaining which, I confess, I can understand comparatively NOTHING either of the glory or the strength of the system: and as a preacher, I should be perpetually hampered, candidly confounded, conscientiously silenced,

“When sent with God’s commission to the heart.”

Impossibilities exclude degrees, except in their evidence. I can more evidently not reach a fixed star with my finger than

the ceiling of my apartment: but really both are impossible, and equally so. Now propose to a man what he knows he cannot do, and let him believe it, and will he do it or attempt it? or will you urge him, very* earnestly, if you latently think it impossible, or beyond all promise of probability? No. Just let him know or suspect the fact of its impossibility, and he cares not for degrees or modes: as long, as he thinks he cannot, he will never try, never do it, never feel his obligation. Yet when we speak as preachers to men—who knows or should assume the fact of any one of them that the next moment he will not give his heart to Christ, as millions have done before him? Not a mortal, nor perhaps an angel! No doctrine of the Bible ascertains it at all. Why not urge him then, directly, luminously, importunately, and in hope, to do it, and that according to God's order—NOW? How does this scriptural simple view spoil the *nexus* of Calvinism? Not at all, as I can see. But it removes it entirely, and the parts fall asunder, you say. Why? Because God holds them in his hand! The man who can see this fact, (and the mode is not to be seen by us,) will have no use for the nameless demi-deified SOMETHING which works in the system such miracles of connection and elucidation. God is the infinite *nexus* of all the things, the beings and the events, in the universe. If I did not see this, in the light of his own word, I might feel the force of your metaphysical argumentation in favour of the mediate importance of an occult "principle." Now it is only in my way; superfluous, intrusive, and injurious to the simplicity of the gospel. Thus you have (1) the mind with its faculties; (2) its controlling principle or proneness to sin; (3) its regeneration by substituting another principle, and an opposite one, by the power of the Spirit; and then, (4) all piety in its streams supplied from the new principle! I cannot see then that we are very dependent on the Spirit, *after* we have got our *vade mecum* of a principle from him! That same principle is the stationary supplier of the streams and usher of the Spirit—and where is the Spirit himself? The *tertium quid* has superseded him. The lieuten-

* We more and more want *revival preaching*; earnest, sincere, luminous, masterly, bold, and faithful. And without corresponding *principle*, as the *stamina* of these, how can we realize permanently that incomparable good?

† Till this is seen and believed, philosophers will probably dispute in darkness, on the relations of cause and effect, antecedent and consequent; "each claiming truth, and truth disclaiming all;" *in honorem tou τα παντα ενεργουντος, αορατου.*

ant has displaced the captain. And where are his credentials? Are the history and the commission of this visionary officer contained in the *Magna Charta*? I think not, after much examination of his claims, and a patient hearing of his counsel. But admit his validity and jurisdiction—*cui bono*? Where is the advantage to the war? to the system of divine moral government? to the demonstrated glory of the reigning God? Why—in eventual inability in all the machines he reigns over to do his will; an inability absolute and known confoundingly; physical and fatal in effect, if not in nature! just the same in rational anticipation, as the hope of swimming with a millstone hanging invincibly around our neck! Here are we by nature in the keeping of the occult principle of sin: till regenerated, *omnibus testibus*, we are nothing, and do nothing, in religion: in regeneration, or the change of our keeping principle, we are perfectly, and rather pluperfectly, passive: our tutelary guard is relieved without our agency; and without an ability, and why not also without all responsibility, of ours! Here is, in effect, pure fatalism! Let these wrong headed views, as I call them; gorgon terrors not so formidable; let them become only as rife throughout our happy land, as they *are now* in some half-ruined congregations that I could name; and it requires no prophetic inspiration to predict the mischiefs: infidelity, and reckless irresponsible action, will overspread our territories like an inundation: the gospel will have lost its charm over the spirits of moral consciousness: the preaching of the gospel, if the phrase be not then ridiculous, will be wholly suppressed, or little attended, or totally—I had almost said—denuded of its potency and glory: and nothing but miracles, never to be expected or wrought, will stop us, “and our offspring with us,” from perdition!

4. I proceed now to tell in fairness why I wrote and published the sermon; what its specific purpose was; and where I yet hope its use may be: how personal, or local, or invasive of the honours of illustrious Calvinistic antiquity, i. e. “the traditions of the elders,” it was, you may judge. The evils which occasioned it, and which it was designed in some degree to reach and remedy, I can state. The real fatalism of sentiment which I found in conversing as a pastor with individuals, and many not of my own charge, whom the whole gospel was poor to teach or to touch on the topic of their perfect and awful accountability, and their imperative duty to

seek salvation according to the gospel; persons these who pretended or really thought, that their organized apathy or voluntary stupidity—as Dr. Beecher calls it—or waiting for conversion, i. e. tempting God by abominable disobedience and presumption, was all they could do, all that orthodoxy prescribed, all that some of the best preachers expected of them; and persons therefore whom, I saw clearly and in some distinguished examples demonstrated, nothing could ever arouse, or reclaim to their senses on this supreme article of *obeying the gospel*, but a storming of their intrenchments, and an abstraction *en masse* of the very bastions on which they stood and smiled in calm defiance of the artillery of God. I was not so weak as to change my theology, or to modify its nature, for their accommodation—*sit fiducia verbo!* Not a particle of this! But I was led to adapt my public and private demonstrations of the truth so as to banish and to brand the hateful libel, as it merited. Nor am I sure that I said or wrote any thing, that is more or other than a just expression of *many principles*, plainly laid down in the written symbols of the Presbyterian Church—which, in their system generic, I love; and in adopting which I have never practised artifice, or deception, or sworn with the *exceptis excipiendis* qualifier of a Jesuit oath; and which, as I adopted, so I will repudiate with a good conscience whenever I see (I do not mean through the eyes of others) sufficient cause; (a consummation never expected;) as I now honour them, not because I am afraid to do otherwise, or because authority, in its bigness and its state, requires and denounces this often contemptibly; but because I have examined the subject, am a friend to independent investigation, and think truth best supported by its own evidence, and the conscientious *piety towards Christ* of all its friends. I think myself indeed a great deal better friend to our symbols, and even a stronger supporter than some few prominent ones whom it were easy to name, but safer to style as busy, clamorous, and I must say, narrow minded persons, who mistake themselves for pillars. The principles to which I refer are such as these: “the word of God—is the only rule to direct us. God hath endued the will of man with that natural liberty, that it is neither forced, nor by any absolute necessity of nature, determined to good or evil. Although in relation to the foreknowledge and decree of God, the first cause, all things come to pass immutably and infallibly, yet, by the same providence, he ordereth them to fall out according to

the nature of second causes, either necessarily, freely, or contingently. All the elect, and they only, are effectually called; although others may be and often are outwardly called by the ministry of the word, and have some common operations of the Spirit; who, FOR THEIR WILFUL NEGLECT AND CONTEMPT OF THE GRACE OFFERED TO THEM, being justly left in their unbelief, do never truly come to Jesus Christ." *Sic credo, credo equidem et gaudens.* I should love here to digress in the just expansion of some principles necessarily involved in the last sentences above cited; but I forbear—not however from the fear of a trial before any Presbyters, either with or without a responsible accuser, on the charge of heresy for holding them.

This popular fatalism that I found, and still find, in astonishing abundance near me; which I knew would forever preclude as far as it went, "according to the nature of second causes," the influence of the gospel; and which I therefore felt it, (as one whose ordination engagements bound him to *nothing more than this,*) my duty to assault and demolish with the weapons of God, as obligated "to be zealous and faithful in maintaining the truths of the gospel, and the purity and peace of the Church, WHATEVER persecution or opposition might arise unto me on that account:" this popular fatalism, I say, though mostly latent, I could often distinctly trace, as it was often boldly fathered, to certain forms and names of preaching, *not exclusively* of the Old School—as you rightly "presume," p. 257 of your Review. Consequently my sermon was written and published not under party feelings at all. See first paragraph of the Introduction. It seemed duty to turn the thoughts of ministerial brethren to a stumbling-block that lay near or on the very sill of the door of the kingdom; and to the crowding thousands of 'impotent folk' in squalid contentment around it, pleading *their sanction* for perishing or waiting there till some miracle was wrought for their passive *μετοικεσία* into it. Perhaps you will say—that my people must be remarkably stupid, supine, and fond of excuses, *arguens degeneres animos*, thus to pervert the ministry of orthodox instruction. I answer—do not assume too much, in your solution. The sermon was dedicated to my people, and published at their request; but not intended for them, or ever preached to them! My people generally know better:—and for intelligence and piety, for usefulness and union in thought and action, I know not why

I might not "boast" of them, as Paul did of his Achaians "to them of Macedonia; for I know the forwardness (*προθυμιαν*) of their mind" in goodness, and am not ashamed of them, as my people whom God hath given me, and whose feet, for Christ's sake, I would consider it an honour as their servant to wash. I know of no people whom I would prefer to serve in the ministry and have no ambition to move from them to any pulpit, or chair, or throne in the world! I would rather be a pastor than a professor or a prince; and much prefer the see of Laight-street to that of any other *street* in the city, unless my people move with me to a preferred location. I am sure I prefer it to the see of any diocess, whether of New York, or Canterbury, or Rome. I say this to show you that it was not restlessness, or partyism, or any other motive of the sort, by which I was influenced in preaching to the Synod.

But as a pastor in New York, and mingling, as my people also do, with strangers, numerous and diverse, I hear and feel what sentiments are rife; and also see their influence. The preaching of many different ministers is necessarily compared; its effects on the people and society at large, by reflection and refraction—especially the latter, are discernible and worthy of animadversion. Let me tell you, then, that I have witnessed many souls encased in obduracy, by the *abuse* of bad and unskilful preaching; which, I fear, is often the *direct* instrument of making more instances of reprobation than conversion; though perhaps it takes the census only of the latter—a common error! I will venture then another synopsis of *dogmas of desolation*, as I would call them; and would, if no *ism* had ever an existence, and if no party of *Triangular* or *Hopkinsian* designation had been known in our Church or existed in our day: I would so term them as a minister of Jesus Christ! I shall state these dogmas mainly in my own words, and dress them rather* uncouthly it may be:—for in general I hate them, and love to hate them, and make it a part of my piety to hate them; *non obstante* the shreds of truth disguised and intermingled in their constitution.

1. The regeneration of the soul is a miracle; every conver-

* It would not hurt my conscience much to "caricature them intentionally: but only by representing them as they are, and making the reality govern the appearance." For the substance, and facts involved in the dogmas, I pledge myself that they are *real*, not *fictitious*.

sion is a miracle; one of the greatest of all miracles is the conversion of the soul to God. Beware of heresy; beware of Hopkinsianism!

I think so too; under such preaching, it were a miracle. Effect on the unconverted: "we are not to blame because God chooses not to work a miracle; what a relief; this is sound preaching, masterly; our chance for a miracle is as good here at least as elsewhere."

2. The soul is entirely passive in regeneration. A logical result from other dogmas!

3. We are all dead by nature, and can do nothing good. Like Lazarus in the grave exactly—whom it required a miracle to revive.

That it did. But miracles are one thing; rebellion is another; moral government is a third; and stupid preaching a fourth. A miracle demonstrates the divinity of a mission from God; and has *other uses* than to symbolize the moral glory or the nature of conversion. *Lazarus* would not (and who would?) have been to blame, if he had *not* "come forth."

4. The means of grace have this greatest use—to demonstrate their own nothingness and the omnipotence of God in subduing the sinner and breaking his heart. They are adapted not to convert, but only to harden the wicked and make them worse and worse.

In miracle-working, there were some sense and little mischief in such a statement. In conciliating men "the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the word of God is quick and powerful: the gospel is the power of God to salvation." Why not call them then *the means of wrath*? Have they no appropriate nature, from which to be characterized and named? or does the wanton wickedness of sinners change their nature? or is wickedness no longer wanton, but only a calamity? Are we passive also in it? Is it any thing like a strain for omnipotence, (under such edification,) to convert a soul or mature a saint?

5. It were shocking heresy for me, my hearers, to tell you to repent this instant, and be converted before you left the house! You know that this is wholly out of your power. You have no ability at all.

Quere. (1) *When exactly* will their obligation to repent and believe the gospel become absolute and instant on them? When a miracle is wrought? (2) Where is the warrant for

such a mode of avoiding shocking heresy? Is it in Mark i. 15. or Luke ix. 57-62. or Acts xvii. 30. or 2. Cor. vi. 1 and 2. or Heb. iii. 7. or Rev. iii. 13-20. or ☞ Jonah iii. 2.

6. You must wait God's time, "in the laborious use of the means;" for you can do nothing of yourselves.

How does the preacher know that God has any special time for the conversion of his hearers? Does he know their election of God, antecedent to their piety? Or are they converted, of course, because they are *his* hearers?

To do justice to the analysis of that unscriptural absurdity, "you can do nothing of yourselves," I have no time or space, I will say that it is a hypocrite's reason of sinning against God. Can he sin "of himself?" or is sinning "nothing?" or is "a laborious use of the means" nothing? or how *can they* use the means at all?

7. These revivals are of very doubtful character. They are often merely "got up" things, proceeding from "a heated imagination;" more of the spirit of man than of God in them; the ministrations that induce them are very Pelagian; their great secret is to "strike while the iron is hot," and urge converts to the communion table immediately; and so they make a revival whenever they please. Some have one hundred and twenty converts added to their Church at once! if they would only wait a few months, they would not have twenty of them to apply, and of these not more than ten sound ones!"*

If a man is the enemy of revivals, were it not more noble to say so; and not cover envy, or sweeten gall, or disguise antipathy, in this way? When ought we to strike—when the iron is cold? waiting while it is hot for the opportunity? Would iron ever get hot, under such preaching? Were not the prime offenders against orthodoxy, those fanatics who baptized three thousand in one day, the fiftieth after the passion? Is their example coming up again; like an ancient heresy, "once decently buried, now raised in its putrid anatomy from the grave of centuries, dressed in a new shroud, and set awalking about the streets?" Shall we not know them by their fruits? Do the Christians made in these revivals disgrace them generally? If a man should happen to turn and be turned from sin to holiness, in one lucid moment, upon the

* I refer here to ultra examples, with few parallels, and chargeable I hope upon no party; they are however no fictions.

principles of revival piety; and should he veer at once one hundred and eighty degrees of the circle; and after that, honour the attraction that first saved him, and keep his celestial polarity with little variation through all the changes of the voyage of life; what traducer of God and his cause is it that should dare to oppose or degrade the revival in which he was converted, or allege that orthodoxy would have kept him longer quarantined in sin, in order to a more sound conversion? How long may a man *innocently* continue in sin, "using the means?"

It was the *virus* of that poisoned orthodoxy, shedding its influences afar and its *miasmata* on the pinions of every breeze, that led me to the course I took: an orthodoxy, falsely so called, that is itself nothing but a caricature of the gospel, and the effects of which are entirely at one with a more honourable infidelity—for both meet here, IRRESPONSIBILITY! Such orthodoxy, however, affords more peace and less hope in sin. On the other hand, among the general *criteria* of doctrines, I would name *the relation they bear to the demonstrated perfection of our accountability to God*, as cardinal and paramount. It is a touch-stone of what is true, only second in regard to the immediate *dicta* of the oracles of God. In light of this, I say that passivity is false, with all its doctrinal brood of darkness and inaction: that I know not to spare it for the sake of its friends; and that to be leavened with it, is a greater misery for a preacher of the gospel in the nineteenth century than — but I forbear the comparison: "as of God in the sight of God speak we in Christ!" You may here take a glance *what I mean* by "the moral history" of passivity doctrines.

II. In what remains, I would remark on the nature of regeneration. The importance of seeing the truth, just here, rise in my estimate *toto animo et indies!*

Perhaps I should say—the relations of regeneration, as they affect the doctrines of truth and the practice of religion: for, of *the thing itself* I have said enough in this article already; the text contains a portrait of it, which seems to me a good likeness; and the nature of the thing is less in dispute, possibly, than its moral relations.

There is a divine influence, "apart from the power of the truth," concerning which my general proposition is, that it is not contrary to the truth or embarrassing to duty; that its legitimate influence, on the mind of the preacher and the

hearer, is—that alone of encouragement in goodness; and this for the following reasons: *First*, About the *mode* of it, we know nothing, and believe no more. *Second*, The fact of it consists in the purpose of election and its execution. *Third*, As to the developed nature of it, all we know is, that *it secures the event* of our obedience, edification, perseverance, and beatification. *Fourth*, It is a *matter* or a *thing* to which, as such, absolutely we have no moral relation—since it is the province of God, and not ours, to order events with reference to his own purposes; though, *Fifth*, To the *doctrine* of it, as an article of faith, we have a moral relation, and a duty in the discharge of which we ought not to delay or feel passively inclined for one moment; but believe it cordially and promptly, to the glory of God, who has plainly revealed it: when believed, *Sixth*, It becomes a principle of action, not of passive doctrine; it becomes a point of illumination, a constituent and a *stamen* of heroic Christian character; it comforts, corroborates, and qualifies us, in God; it is “not our rule, but our resource,” as Mr. Jay of Bath, beautifully says. *Seventh*, It becomes thus doctrinally an element of discrimination or a test of character. To believe it is virtue, a “fruit of the Spirit:” to deny it, to neglect or disparage it, is impiety. It is also the criterion of Arminianism. Conversion, when genuine, consists much in believing it cordially and promptly to the glory of God: so to believe it—too suddenly or soon, is impossible. *Eighth*, The principle of this influence is universal, and extends to our daily and constant actions: if, therefore it makes us passive in any, or embarrasses us, so does it in all. “Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?” The universe is a *plenum*, for God is there: immensity is full of Him. Truly, “we can do nothing of ourselves!” verily *nothing!* “In him we live, and move, and have our being.” And what is the providence of God, and how great its extent? The province of invisible indelible agency, as defined admirably *et mihi cordi* in our Catechism. In view of these premises then, is this influence in our way at all? No more than in natural actions, secular ones, all of them! Not half as much in our way when we obey, as when we transgress! In the former—all gloriously in our favour; in the latter all horribly against us! It subserves efficiently the execution of the whole scheme of grace, in the regeneration of the elect, in their sanctification, conservation, and eternal blessedness. It maintains, not in-

fringes, the perfect moral agency of all. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." If we can do nothing of ourselves, we can do all things of God: and we must excuse ourselves from every thing theocratically or pantheistically, and we might as well do it atheistically too; or excuse ourselves from nothing that is "true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report." Our dependence does not destroy our nature or the moral nature of our actions: it ascertains and establishes them. If God has "foreordained whatsoever comes to pass"—and true and glorious is it that he has—yet *what* has come to pass, in these lofty and sublime relations? Why—a moral agent; an active conscious being, equally dependent and accountable; one whose actions are properly compared with law, and their moral qualities are absolutely and metaphysically his own; and one, concerning whom to suppose that the purpose of God, and the rule of his providence, and the necessary condition of created existence, impair his perfect accountability—is to suppose (the greatest absurdity possible) the divine purposes frustrated of their noblest object; adverse to their own most august and meditated achievements; at conflict with themselves, as ordaining what has *not* "come to pass;" and that infinite creative and providential wisdom, so "wonderful in counsel and excellent in working," has failed of its master-piece, the establishment of a complete moral agency, and the glory of a perfect moral government. This may involve the mystery of "a wheel within a wheel;" but this is, I think, no solecism in mechanics, and no very abstruse proposition in divinity.

Ninth, An enlightened view of this influence, by faith in the testimonies of God respecting it, leading to its legitimate effects on the mind and the conduct, is INFINITELY AND INDISPENSABLY ENCOURAGING IN DUTY, AND THAT ALWAYS AND UNIVERSALLY. It discourages as well—only from sin! It ascertains to us the fact that God is the *nexus* of events: it is the most terrible and persuasive dehortation from sin, in appeal to our interests and our fears, conceivable; and it is quite superlative *ut calcar ad pietatem perpetuum* as a prescription or recipe, stimulating to universal goodness; imparting unequalled constancy to principle, conviction to faith, facility to prayer, resource to piety, vigour to thought, contentment to privation, courage to exposure, steadiness to purpose, and action to usefulness. "And who is he that shall harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?" Such a worship-

per "shall not be afraid of evil tidings; his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord. And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are the called according to his purpose." What a motive to repentance! Is it any wonder, "according to the nature of second causes," that revivals of religion follow, where these gigantic glories of the truth are preached with wisdom and faithfulness? *Tenth*, This influence, though wrought executively by the Omnicif Spirit, that "made me," and that "garnished the heavens," and did not he make one "partner for the first occupant of Paradise?"—this influence is not exactly identical with the influence of the Spirit, as generally respected in Scripture. See Gal. v. 16—26. The latter may be resisted, striven against, opposed, suffocated in the conscience, or kept mouldering in an agonized bosom for months: this then I would call *the moral* or scriptural*, that *the providential or physical*; and, in this sense, I believe *ex animo* in the *physical* influence, in every thing, in religion and out of it, and more specially, in its important aspects and relations, in regeneration, and onward forever in the process of "holiness to the Lord." Charnock, in his admirable sermons on Providence, holds the same doctrine, and goes as far as I do in honouring its ubiquity: yet not further than the blessed Paul; "In whom (sc. Christ) also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." *Eleventh*. This influence, in the hands of the ALL PERFECT, gloriously coincides with the other, and both with the holiness and happiness of those who desire to please God and serve him: viewed together as they are, they present perhaps the highest possible incentive and solace to universal piety, which faith ever uses, or God reveals and owns. Hence, *Twelfth*. It is of the greatest importance that both should be preached; purely, skilfully, with calm dignity, unaffected zeal, in their symmetry and relative harmony, according to the rule of *their scriptural connections and uses*, in a way of demonstration and evidence; and to the end that men may do their duty, be actuated in goodness, steady in principle, occupied in "glory and virtue," prompt in service, "steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; for

* By *moral*, I mean that which has immediate relation to law, as right or wrong; by *physical*, every other influence or relation, in mind (as the physiology of mind) as well as matter.

as much as we know that our labour is not in vain in the Lord.”

Among Calvinistic preachers, it is perhaps a pervading fault, as it is also a dreadful, and yet a corrigible one, to mistake and so mis-state *the moral relation of this influence*. A skilful interpreter of the word of God—“one among a thousand,” as Elihu styles him—observes, I think, always these two rules: first, to ascertain *the meaning of the passage*; and second, to determine as carefully *its moral relation to us*. This latter must be done mainly in light of a principle admirably premised in our standards; where we are told that “the word of God” teaches “principally”* two great departments of instruction; distinct, though related; either sometimes implying the other, but never clashing with its scope; addressing faith with information and duty with command; called, technically and well, the *credenda* and the *agenda* of religion; having priority as stated there, the articles of faith and the rules of practice; embodying ‘the whole duty of man,’ or ‘what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man.’ What miserable confusion, what perverse theology, what hopeless edification, when an article of faith is treated as a rule of conduct! That divine influence, “which is apart from the power of the truth,” is it a rule of action? or an article of faith *only*? undoubtedly the latter; and this is *its moral relation to us*! It is one of the things that we are to *believe concerning God*; without which we have no right conceptions of HIM, break offensively the second precept of the decalogue, and rase the foundations of duty done. Here is what I deem in element the cardinal blunder of ten thousand preachers, including perhaps often—for I fear not to say *peccavi* when *consciuis facinoris*—myself. IT IS A BLUNDER NEVER MADE IN THE BIBLE! Its effect is to confuse, obtund, and ruin the minds of our catechumens and hearers. It is *the fault*, in relation to regeneration or the source of the fault, which the sermon was intended, to expose. Is not a Christian active in all his moral relations? In believing and obeying God? Certainly active in the total progress of religion, in the soul and the life: then why not also in its rise? If active progressively, then why not initially too? If active in the work

* I would say *totally*—for *what* of its contents is not included in the classification?

of sanctification, why not in the whole of it, in its commencement as well as its continuance; in regeneration, as well as sanctification? How is a man regenerated, but as he believes and obeys the gospel? Is he regenerated *before* he does this? Is he more dependent in regeneration one whit than in sanctification? THE TIME WILL COME, AND THAT SOON, WHEN NOT AN INDIVIDUAL (*exceptio firmet regulam*) OF STANDING IN THE MINISTRY CAN BE FOUND THAT WILL NOT WONDER TO LEARN THAT WISE AND LEARNED WORTHIES OF OUR CHURCH, IN 1831, COULD HAVE DOUBTED FOR A MOMENT THAT MAN IS ACTIVE IN REGENERATION; AND THAT UNIVERSALLY, NECESSARILY, AND ABSOLUTELY. The sentiment is as important as it is true!

The glorious doctrine of election, in all its noble branches and legitimate fruits, is related morally to our faith, as what we are "to believe concerning God." We are *not* to believe it, (because it is not revealed, personally and absolutely) concerning man! Who are, and who are not, elected, is not revealed. But that God, is such a God as election manifests, is a fact revealed to faith, and obligatory in its proper moral relation instantly, and on all of us. How long ought a man to be going about, in "the laborious use of the means," to believe this? Just as long as God allows in his word, and no longer. Prov. xxvii. 1. So long then, and no longer, requires it to be regenerated; for the moment he cordially believes, he is "born of the Spirit;" and till he thus believes, he transgresses, in his very prayers, *or sermons*,* at the communion-table, or whatever other means he may prefer in the pride of his folly laboriously to use. If he says, what shall I do? God says—not man, but God; "Repent therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." If he replies; "Sir, I cannot;" rejoins the same authority, "then you can—perish! this is your *necessary* doom, except you repent; for it is the alternative, and the only one, revealed. God does not wish you to perish; far from that. Still, perish you must, and that eternally, except you repent, and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." Repentance, faith, love, and all the graces, are morally homogeneous and substantially the same. It is THIS VIEW IDENTICALLY of the means of grace, prosecuted with intelligence and affection, and faithfulness, and perseverance, and "the soft tongue that breaketh the bone," that

* The judgment day will probably reveal more orthodox ministers who *never* were converted than any one now apprehends!

God is wont habitually to bless, in the revival and flourishing life of his work:—while passivity districts are left without a miracle or a mystery, arid and moistureless as the sterile summits of Gilboa; and their destitution OFTEN shamefully charged upon the sovereignty of God. How comfortable to indolence, false orthodoxy, and Antinomian presumption, thus to pervert the articles of faith, and transgress the best, plainest, and most practicable rules of action!

But do you not believe that God is the giver of the increase? Yes, I *believe* it; for it is an article of faith, inasmuch as it is a subject of revelation: I believe, love, admire, adore, preach, and praise it! I trust it too; and thus it becomes an infinite strengthener to all my efforts for God. But—must I make it a rule of action, and myself a fool of action to honour the perversion and stupidity I have shown in doing it? I ought to have said—ought I to infer passivity, and practice stagnation, and come to pure fatalism, in honour of it? But still, says the objector, “Paul may plant, Apollos may water, God only CAN give the increase.” I answer—this is what I do not believe, because there is no such text in the Bible. When you take it from its proper *historical* form, as an article of faith and a glorious fact; and throw it into the *potential* form, where it becomes, in the common perverted parlance of millions, a mischievous and deceitful paralysis of action, with its *can* and its *cannot*—a corrupt rule of action, or rather of inaction, I demur, I protest, and I preach on the soul’s activity in regeneration! See the passage, according to the rule of *how readest thou?* and this—*its Scriptural connection and use.* 1 Cor. iii. 6. 13. 15. But it is very hard, says one, to know *just how far* we are to depend on God! Is it? I think quite otherwise. Depend ALL on him, and do your duty! and he will work in you, and by you, and accept your praise. Obey his orders, trusting in his prosperous government and infinite all-sufficiency. You have nothing in the world to do but—obey! If any thing else is to be done, it is not your duty, province, or concern. “Have faith in God.” Read the thirty-seventh Psalm, with the forty-sixth—Luther’s Viaticum; Zech. iv. 6—10, and just do YOUR DUTY, world without end.

Still, it is important to teach men the secret of their dependence; to make them know it, the whole of it, and confess and feel it to his praise. In this position, all Christians are agreed; with all my heart, I grant it. The means, the style,

the manner in which we shall attempt to bring them to a *proper* sense of it—*this is the question that possibly divides us!* One way is—to stop them (at least negatively) from doing their duty, till they feel and own aright their dependence! to admonish, and doubt, and embarrass, and warn, and hamper them—till they are incapable of confidence in God; and become afraid to do any thing; and then they learn to give *all the glory* to God. The glory—of what? Of passivity, of dependence that prevents obedience, and of devoutly doing nothing in an orthodox style. So does not God! The sense of dependence, and the only one, that he cares to foster in us, results from a cultivated and practical sense of our obligation to love and serve him: and this he inspires in all his word, as the only legitimate mode of arriving at the other! Let a man feel, as he ought, his accountability; let him see its absolute perfectness; let him be stimulated through the truth to avoid sin with an ingenuous antipathy, because he cordially approves of the law of God and affects holiness:—that is the man, and the only man, whose acclaim of glory to God, as the author of all his religion, will be steady, intelligent, sincere, unaffected, undrugged, and worth observing. Such homage will be acceptable to God. I have often *mecum* characterized or classed preachers in a two-fold *σχέσις*, in reference to the inculcation of religion, as those who think it best to subserve the piety of their hearers, by constantly insisting on dependence; and those who think it best to subserve the same end by constantly insisting on obligation. Now, of the latter class, thus generalized, I say, in the fear of God, the following things: 1. That *theirs is the way of the Bible*. That the Bible inculcates both, is certainly true. But who can doubt that all its influence natively tends, and that with a prodigious and a momentous persuasion, to beget and to mature a perfect sense of perfect accountability? Let any man who doubts it, keep the problem in his thoughts and read the Bible (systems of divinity and technicalities of thought forgot) with it in his eye, that he may be able to know “what saith the Scripture” on this qualifying and controlling question of questions. 2. *Exceptions apart, God blesses them with the revivals*. As this is a question of fact, I leave it for individual observation; remarking, that some illustrious exceptions are—no exceptions at all! the reason:—they preach obligation, and offer the gospel so simply, fully, honestly, powerfully, and constantly, (I do not say quite *uniformly*),

that in effect (when not in name) they belong to New School and not Old; *sit venia verbo!* They are no passivity men in their example; and very little such in the engrossed scope of their ministrations. I add, 3. That *where very passive, very dependence inculcating views, have distinguished the preaching*, my observation is utterly wrong, if the rebuke of Gilboa has not been just as manifest! 4. The inculcators of dependence first, and of obligation second or never, have not, I think, been distinguished for the miracles of Omnipotence with them, which they seemed to expect: and when I have read or heard their arguments, telling of the glorious ground of *hope* for success, affected myself with the encroaching paralysis, I have said—show me your facts! I have glanced at the official history of the sermonizer himself, and have *not* been malignant in supposing that certain influences of a personal nature *might* have had an unconscious action on his mind, in discolouring and passivizing its theology, seemingly with an angel hue of superior devotion, and a flame of more empyreal piety! It may look modest, and work withal a great lustration of character, to say—divine sovereignty has denied me the great favour of a revival, and I am resigned to it! God is a sovereign—amen! 5. *The man who is willing to do his duty, and who actually and habitually does it, is the only one who does not make his dependence an excuse for his sin!*—I observe this, as a characteristic of those Christians who are made under the high-pressure influence of the preaching of obligation first, and dependence next, and both in musical accord, to the glory of God. I subjoin, that it follows, 6. That *the only legitimate and safe way of urging dependence*, is by urging (of course with a rich and varied enlargement) obligation, in its full and absolute and perfect finish in the constitution of God. I do not mean that we should legalize, be rigorous, and irony; or keep out of view God forbid! the other pole from that!—the infinitely rich and melting mercy of God in Christ Jesus, or fail to exhibit all the touching notes and tones of the history of our redemption: but so to preach, as to produce, and vindicate, and continually to deepen, the impression of perfect accountability. In this way we may give light and force to the idea of superabounding grace. There are preachers, indeed, of the New School, who seem to make moral government (and what is the definition of this cardinal matter but the administration of law—not gospel necessarily, but law—over accountable creatures?)

a succedaneum for the gospel; some who inculcate obligation, as if they had never read John iii. 14—18, or as if obligation merely, were the only idea in revelation, or as if there was “a law given that could give life!” These hammer cold iron, or blow the embers that will not ignite, in a style that forcibly reminds one of the poetical clatter of the subterranean Cyclops, at work spondaically on the anvil, very regularly and monotonously industrious in their vocation! A tune that suits the forging of thunderbolts—

Olli inter sese magna vi brachia tollunt.

On this account perhaps—as a specimen—BELLAMY'S TRUE RELIGION DELINEATED ought to be called THE DOCTRINE OF OBLIGATION HAMMERED IN AND CLINCHED! for, excellent as the book is, and I love it, as a treatise on accountability and a vindication of the preceptive perfection of law, I think it wrongly named, as not a good *delineation* of true religion! The tree of life is scarce found in it, and then not “in the midst of the garden.” It might suit hypocrites, to unmask them; and old Christians, to search and chasten them; and ministers and students of divinity, to acuminate their views of the subjects of which it treats; but I would keep it ordinarily from young Christians:—for, ONE* I lament, these twice seven winters, whom I suppose it first palsied in mind, and then literally killed in body; and from the unconverted, for it is very questionable if it would not harden them alone; it preaches as the gospel, or the Bible, does not. It exemplifies little of *the revealed connection and use* of the truth—though far is my heart from wishing to disparage so excellent a treatise! I give it as an example of the style in which obligation is truly, but not well, preached; “being alone:” and add, that such is not the way to convert souls, especially when it pervades the preaching. “Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression. Therefore it (salvation) is of faith, that it might be by grace, to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed.” The direct rays of mercy should always pour upon the path of the preacher, and make for the hearer the day of legitimate hope in Jesus Christ, our glorious propitiation. But what I mean is—that obligation, as such, should be shown in its perfection, so that grace

* C. G. An accomplished son of Nassau-Hall, and I doubt not, a son of heaven too!

—dulce decus meum!

may be appreciated in its true nature; that obligation, as such, like the steady law of attraction among the spheres of our astronomy, should never be affected by the variations common to subordinate and terrene locations—by darkness or day, summer or winter, sunshine or storm, tornado or inundation, good or evil, of partial and personal experience.

I was surprised to read the parenthesis in the paragraph with which you concluded; “with the exception of the mere extent of the atonement, a point of very subordinate importance to that of its nature.” A true view of its nature, will, I think, lead to a just view of its extent. But truly its extent appears to me of **VERY GREAT** and daily of more and more importance; and that it is not so seemingly in your estimation is the occasion of surprise. Of course I cannot now take up that other world: yet well am I aware of the connection between limited atonement and passive regeneration; and of the growing disconnection of revivals of religion with both!

I shall not subjoin any asseveration of pure motives, &c., in this communication. What my motives are, God knoweth; and this is enough, certainly for my responsibility, possibly for my consolation. But one grand desire of my soul, congenial exquisitely with the ὁ γέγραφα preceding, I will yet inscribe. Let its seeming audacity be forgiven and its exhortation suffered; for this world will soon contain us no more. Its apology may be read in Leviticus, xix. 15—18. Possibly there is little in it of party or earth; possibly something of “glory to God in the highest; on earth peace, and good will to men.” It respects that peerless circle of promise and probability, in the government of God, whose lucid centre is—**THE DOCTRINAL AND PRACTICAL ECLAIRCISSEMENT OF THE PRESBYTERIAN MINISTRY IN THIS COUNTRY!** I believe they are now *incomparably* the first for intelligence, piety, and usefulness: that they preach the gospel with more sense, force, and efficiency, than any other description of the ministry in this nation; and that they are better suited to the times, places, and manners of the country, than any other. Were they all more discriminating; more disabused of passivity forms and stumbling-blocks of doctrine; more addicted to a direct and clear and complete *offer of the gospel* with importunity of zeal “to every creature,” and an unfettered cordiality in urging their hearers *immediately* to accept of it; more like Paul in the versatility of their address, in the free, open, unembarrassed style of their ministrations; (see 1 Cor. ix. 19—

27, et passim;) more invulnerable to just impeachment of *contradictory* statements in the pulpit and even in the same sermon, nay, of dealing in contradictions and paradoxes—and it is no proof at all that a thing is false or contemptible in the way of censure that a sinner says it, *fas est et ab hoste doceri*; more devoted, prayerful, and united; more one in sentiment, in soul, and in action, as nothing but *the Scripture* ever will instrumentally make us:—what might our* thousands of preachers not achieve, in extending the reign of the heavens over our total population? By the ungrudged and ready blessing of God Almighty, our own God, HE WOULD DO ALL, AND WE COULD DO ALL! and this nation would be revolutioned to “truth and soberness,” grace and salvation. “One should chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight.” The centres of influence would be touched, and their dependent circles moved, in homage to the name of JESUS; and the influences of conversion to the world would radiate in ten thousand forms from the American continent! With all the faults of Presbyterians, and with all my faults, I am a Presbyterian. The common enemy honours us as one with his indiscriminate hatred. He accuses us of doing all the good; and Providence may yet use him to convince us of the necessity of union! But this union, to be lasting or desirable, must be in truth and for the holy ends of “the kingdom of heaven” alone. Partyism must be viewed as sin; ambition as treason against the Holy Ghost; and human authority every where postponed to the supremacy of the word of God. The Bible must be more studied, honoured, expounded. Interpretation must be the monarch of theological reasoning; evidence the light of his throne; demonstration the medium of his sway; and divine legitimacy, ununsurped, the strength and stability of his government, forbearance must be mutually exercised, and that to the farthest limit of ability or endurance; “Jesus Christ became a human God, that we might become divine men.” We must learn to garner up only the virtues of others and the faults that are our own. Denunciations, suspicions, manœuvrings, must be religiously foregone. Liberality of feeling and sentiment, fulness and freedom of discussion, courtesy and gentleness of manners, must mark our reciprocal intercourse. No man, however old or conspicuous or venerable, must set up himself for a judge, a standard, or a sentinel. There must be no

* I speak of Presbyterian ministers generically, as not confined to our denomination.

heresy-hunters, no disorganizers, no innovators. There must be sound Catholicism, latitude of thought, interchange of views. The discipline of the Church must not be handled with officiousness, or brandished in menace, or despised with impunity. Union must be desired, kindness manifested, and A UNIVERSAL REVIVAL OF RELIGION prayerfully and practically sought. Prayer must be more practised in secret by the ministry themselves, and its fruits more exemplified in all their deportment. Youth must abstain from forwardness, and age from usurpation. Ignorance must not be positive, nor learning dictatorial. Goodness must become more the criterion of worth than greatness or station; and HOLINESS TO THE LORD must be written—and ours is the responsibility to write it, each for one—on the principles and the actions of every individual.

SAMUEL H. COX.

New York, August, 1831.

ART. IV.—REMARKS ON DR. COX'S COMMUNICATION.

WE have departed from the established usage of periodical works in admitting the communication of Dr. Cox. For this departure, as well as on account of the character of the article in question, we owe some explanation to our readers. This is the more necessary, as we are not willing to be considered as now setting a precedent, which shall render it in any degree incumbent on us, to publish the rejoinders of all who may wish to appeal from the decisions of this Review, to the judgment of the public. There is an evident propriety in those who feel constrained to make such an appeal, choosing some other vehicle for the purpose. We have already been requested to give up a large part of a number of the *Repertory* to a vehement attack on the validity of our own ordination. Our Baptist brethren may think it reasonable to request us to assail infant baptism, in their behalf; and in short any man, no matter what his sentiments, might, on this principle, employ us as the means of advocating his cause before the public. There was the less ground for the present application, as Dr. Cox does not pretend that he has been unfairly dealt with. He has no wrongs to redress. By his own admission, his doctrines were fairly presented and kindly discussed.