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I. SOME POPULAR MISCONCEPTIONS OF PRESBYTERIANISM.

There is about the title of this article a faint and somewhat unpleasant suggestion of the old play upon the words orthodoxy and other-doxo, my doxy and your doxy. Bigoted though the paronomasia may sound, yet the gist of the jest is just; no one would willingly hold aught but the truth, or yet, aught less than the truth; any man's real creed, therefore, must necessarily be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, as he sees it; so, then, to a writer sincere in his purpose, and true to his conviction, every conception other than his conception is misconception. If, however, one readily recognizes and candidly confesses his limitations, repudiates all pretence to speak *ex cathedra*, disavowing any individual illumination to see, or any special authority to declare, the truth, perhaps there will be nothing presumptuous in an attempt to set forth, and to set right, what he believes to be certain very prevalent misconceptions of Presbyterianism in the popular mind.

Of course the writer recognizes the fact that Calvinism and Presbyterianism are not synonymous terms; yet as the Presbyterian Church is, more than any other, thoroughly and generally identified with this system of faith, and inasmuch, moreover, as the chief objections obtaining against Presbyterianism are directed against its Calvinistic doctrine, we may be pardoned in an article designed to be popular for using the terms somewhat interchangeably.

Abuse of Calvinism has long been the favorite resort of igno-

VI. "ANNIHILATION."

THEY boast that "death is an eternal sleep,"
Where, if no morning e'er restores delight,
At least, no mourner ever wakes to weep.
The simile is false; the endless night
That has no dawn, brings not the soul to rest,
But to despair; for he who rests awakes
To conscious ease that satisfies his quest
For recompense of pain. The life that makes
A woeful ending is a woeful life.
He is the victor who retains the field
When battle ends; and thus the closing strife
Of earth-born anguish, if the future yield
No compensation, must forever cast
Its blackness backward on the wretch's fate.

Let nature speak, whose craving, deep and vast
Yearns for existence, be our conscious state
Or sweet or bitter; like the seeing eye
Insatiable of light, or ear of sound,
Desire instinct, inwrought of God most high,
Not rule of interest astutely found
By after calculation, as is taught
Of our first father's sleep in paradise,
"With drowsied sense untroubled, though he thought
He to the nothing whence he took his rise
Was passing then." It is the voice divine,
Wiser than reason, which instructs our wish
For endless being! Else, why is it mine,
Unlike the unreasoning bird or beast or fish,
To recollect the past; to anticipate;
To fear the future woe; to hope the good?
Accursed was the gift of prescient thought
That raised our empty pride above the brood
Of brutish things, for it a lie hath taught.
The hind can crop the herb and course the lawn,

Or drink the mountain spring with thoughtless glee,
 Untroubled by the hour her dying fawn
 Cost her a transient pang; nor doth foresee
 The hunter's coming shaft that seeks her breast;
 No memory brings past sorrows, no foresight
 Arrays its future terrors to molest
 Her present joy; one sudden thrill of fright,
 One stroke, one death-throe ends the whole career,
 Simple and brief, but full-orbed in its joy.
 Why should I die like her if I must fear,
 Remember, hope, desire, doomed to employ
 My noblest powers of being to pursue
 Futility? Why mine to stretch the thought
 To progress onward, and the endless view
 Of growth of soul with larger glories fraught,
 In widening vistas mounting through the realms
 Of knowledge boundless? Why when present love
 With its alluring bliss the heart o'erwhelms,
 Is it ordained our foresight still must rove
 To future days, that love might fill like this
 With equal joys, yet know it must not be?
 Why is it reason will not, cannot cease
 To frame that thought supreme, eternity,
 Capacious of infinitude of good,
 Mocking the soul with cravings infinite,
 If life must be the span the bestial brood
 Enjoys? Abhorred span! That art but meet
 To shew us beings' woes, and then its loss
 Irreparable; cursed be the boon
 Of such existence, cheating with its dross
 The golden hopes it sanctioneth, as soon
 As they begin to glow. The better lot
 Is given the brute, who drinks the trivial cup
 Of life, and ends, forgetting and forgot.
 If death ends all, a blacker thought looms up;
 Then all we love must perish when they die;
 We part forever, and the love that blest
 Our hearts remains a wound that shall not dry
 Its bitter stream till nothingness arrest
 Our woe and being by one common blow.

Love is immortal: all things else may die;
 The forest kings decay; the ceaseless flow
 Of ancient rivers, proudly sweeping by
 Long buried cities, wane; the steadfast heads
 Of everlasting mountains waste and stoop;
 The hoary seas desert their sunless beds;
 This ordered frame may backward droop
 To endless chaos; but the eye
 That shines with love's self-sacrificing light,
 Outlasts the beams which from Arcturus fly,
 Orion or Boötes; it is bright
 With God's own rays. He is the sun of love,
 And they the orbs that round the centre roll,
 Reflecting him, as they forever move
 In circles shaped by his supreme control.
 He is eternal; so the gift divine!

Is all we love then mortal? Do the fires
 Of genius, kindled from the heavenly shrine
 Of truth and beauty, perish, as expires
 The gilded butterfly or tinted rose?
 Or shall the sage's vision, that can pierce
 Through nature's secrets, make the sea disclose
 His deep abyss, and ride his billows fierce;
 Can map the planets' pathway and foretell
 Their sure returns; can bridge the flood;
 That can the storm-cloud's subtile bolt expel;
 "Can look from nature up to nature's God,"
 And in his works can read his deeper thought;
 Be quenched in darkness like the rotting eye
 Of newt or toad? The heroism that wrought
 A nation's disenthralment, fain to die
 For country's weal, and seek no recompense
 But conscious right, the martyr's steadfast faith
 Which joys to die for truth, and own no sense
 Of fiery torments; mother's love, which hath
 No thought of self, consummate effluence
 Of Heaven's own virtue; perish evermore
 As utterly as hypocrite's pretence,
 Or as the bubbles bursting on the shore,
 Or as the glitter of the serpent's scales
 Decaying back to dust? 'Tis blasphemy!

Bethink ye ; if this creed of death prevails
 To doom our spirits to mortality,
 It leaves no trace of God on nature's page.
 If man is soulless, then an atheist world
 Is all he knows, where senseless forces rage
 In fire, and sea, and storm, and suns are hurled
 With troops of waiting stars, by aimless might,
 Through voids immense, and blind mechanic fate
 Inexorable, on its throne of night,
 Sightless and pitiless, maintains its state.
 In earth or heaven there is no ear to hear
 The sufferer's prayer ; no heart to feel his woe ;
 No hand to shield the just, or to repair
 The foulest wrong that ruthless force can do.
 So right eternal perishes, and crime
 Endures eternal, scorning all repeal.
 Then are this lower earth, these heavens sublime,
 One vast machine, 'neath whose remorseless wheel,
 The corn is human hearts, instinct of pain,
 And joy, and hope, and fear, that writhe and bleed
 Till ground to nothingness. Oh, piteous grain !
 Oh, dreadful engine ! monster ! That dost feed
 Thine endless grind with countless precious lives !
 Is such a world our home ? 'Tis dark as hell !
 Its joys but mock us, since no joy survives,
 But death and loss irreparable dwell
 Perpetual masters. Yet one other fate
 There is, more black, the eternal recompense
 Which conscious guilt forewarns it may await
 The soul which cannot die, nor find defence
 Against the judge, changeless, omnipotent.
 Ah ! This the thought which drives the coward heart,
 The desperate alternative to choose
 'Twixt hell and nothingness. A better part
 Appears to faith. Then why, oh mortals, lose
 That nobler choice, redemption ? Bought with blood
 Of God incarnate, wrought by power divine,
 The safe inheritance of perfect good.
 The grace that shall your inmost souls refine
 From error, sin and sorrow, and bestow

The angel's life of bliss and purity,
 Whose years are measured only by the flow
 Of God's eternity; the gift as free
 To every thirsting soul as air of heaven!
 Why do men turn from glories such as these
 To dreary night and death? And still elect
 Infinite loss and naught o'er boundless seas
 Of joy? Because, oh shame; their guilty fears detect
 The treason and the folly they have wrought
 Against themselves and their best destiny
 In serving sin! This infamy hath taught
 (And this alone) the atheists' grovelling plea,
 That death may be to them "eternal sleep."

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