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ART. I.—*Memoirs of the Life of the Rev. Charles Simeon, M. A., late Senior Fellow of King's College, and Minister of Trinity Church, Cambridge*, with a selection from his writings and correspondence; edited by the Rev. William Carus, M. A., Fellow and Senior Dean of Trinity College, and Minister of Trinity Church, Cambridge. The American edition edited by the Right Rev. Charles P. McIlvaine, Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church, for the Diocese of Ohio. New York, Robert Carter, 58 Canal street: Pittsburg, 56 Market street.

THE Rev. Charles Simeon was a burning and a shining light in the English church in his day. Although there were among his contemporaries, men of greater genius and greater learning, yet it may reasonably be doubted, whether any individual, during the period of his ministry, left so extensive and so deep an impression on the public mind, as Mr. Simeon. In our opinion, evangelical religion, in the Church of England, owes more to his exertions, under the blessing of God, than to the labours of any one man. The reader, however, will be better able to form a

The general tenor of Dr. Davidson's historical style is admirable: we say the general tenor; because he sometimes fails to please us. In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, it is very far above what is usual; in elegance, simplicity, and transparency; in the hundredth case, it offends us by a starched elaboration which mars the general effect. Our remark applies to the surface, and to a small segment of it. This opinion we have already expressed; and we have only to renew our declaration that the faults, as compared with the excellencies, of the work, are small; that it is characterized by impartiality and fidelity; and that the author has performed an acceptable service to the Church of his and our fathers.

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- ART. III.—1. *Discourses on Christian Nurture.* By Horace Bushnell, Pastor of the North Church, Hartford Approved by the Committee of Publication. Boston: Massachusetts Sabbath School Society. 1847. 12mo. pp. 72.
2. *Dr. Tyler's Letter to Dr. Bushnell on Christian Nurture.* Svo. pp. 22.
3. *An Argument for "Discourses on Christian Nurture," addressed to the Publishing Committee of the Massachusetts Sabbath School Society,* By Horace Bushnell. Hartford: Edwin Hunt. 1847. Svo. pp. 48

THE leading idea of Dr. Bushnell's Discourses, is organic, as distinguished from individual life. Whatever may be thought of the expression, or whatever may be the form in which it lies in his mind, it represents a great and obvious truth; a truth, which however novel it may appear to many of our New England brethren, is as familiar to Presbyterians as household words. Strange, and in our view distorted, as is the form in which this truth appears in Dr. Bushnell's book, and incongruous as are the elements with which it is combined, it still has power to give his Discourses very much of an "Old-school" cast, and to render them in a high degree attractive and hopeful in our estimation. Apart from the two great illustrations of this truth, the participation of the life of Adam by the whole race, and of the life of Christ, by all believ-

ers, we see on every hand abundant evidence that every church, nation and society has a common life, besides the life of its individual members. This is the reason why nothing of importance can occur in one part of the church, without influencing all other parts. No new form of doctrine, no revival or decline of spiritual life can exhibit itself in New England, that is not effective throughout the Presbyterian church. We as a body owe, in no small measure, our character as distinguished from other Presbyterian communities to our participation, so to speak, of the life of New England; and the New England churches, are indebted, in like manner, for their character as distinguished from other congregational bodies, to the influence of their Presbyterian brethren. No community can isolate itself. The subtle influence which pervades the whole, permeates through every barrier, as little suspected and yet as effective as the magnetic or electric fluid in nature. This fact, may be explained in a manner more or less obvious or profound according to our philosophy or disposition, but it cannot be denied, and should not be disregarded.

We are therefore not uninterested spectators of the changes going on in New England. They are changes in the body of which we are members, and their effects, for good or evil, we must share. We are not therefore stepping out of our own sphere, or meddling with what does not concern us, in calling attention to Dr. Bushnell's book and to the discussions to which it has given rise.

The history of this little volume is somewhat singular. Dr. Bushnell was appointed by the Ministerial Association of which he is a member, to discuss the subject of Christian training. He produced two discourses from his pulpit, and read the argument before the Association, who requested its publication. To this he assented, but before his purpose was executed, a request came from a member of the Committee of the Massachusetts Sabbath School Society, that the publication should be made by them. The manuscript was forwarded to the committee who retained it in their possession six months, twice returned it to the author for modifications, and finally published it with their approbation. It excited no little attention, being favourably noticed in some quarters, and unfavourably in others. So much disapprobation however was soon manifested, that the committee felt called upon

to suspend its publication. We are not surprised at any of these facts. We do not wonder that the committee kept the book so long under advisement; or that they should ultimately venture on its publication; or that when published, it should create such a sensation, or meet with the fate which actually befel it. There is enough in the book to account for all this. Enough of truth most appropriate for our times, powerfully presented, to make the committee anxious to bring it before the churches; enough of what was new in form and strange in aspect, to create doubt as to its effect and its reception; and enough of apparent and formidable error to account for the alarm and uneasiness consequent on its publication. We cannot regret that the book has seen the light, and done, or at least begun, its work. We anticipate immeasurably more good than evil from its publication. What is wrong, we trust will be sifted out and perish, what is right, will live and operate.

The truths which give value to this publication, and from which we anticipated such favourable results, are principally the following. First, the fact that there is such a divinely constituted relation between the piety of parents and that of their children, as to lay a scriptural foundation for a confident expectation, in the use of the appointed means, that the children of believers will become truly the children of God. We do not like the form in which Dr. Bushnell states this fact; much less, as we shall probably state more fully in the sequel, the mode in which he accounts for it; but the fact itself is most true and precious. It is founded on the express and repeated declaration and promise of God. He said to Abraham: I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God to thee and to thy seed after thee. Deut. vii. 9. Know, therefore, that Jehovah thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations. Deut. xxxix. 6. The Lord thy God will circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God, with all thine heart and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live. Is. lix. 21. As for me this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord, my Spirit that is upon thee and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth

of thy seed's seed, from henceforth forever. In the New Testament the fact that the promises made to believers include their children, was recognised from the very foundation of the Christian church. In the sermon delivered by Peter on the day of Pentecost, he said, the promise is to thee and to thy seed after thee. And Paul assures us even with regard to outcast Israel, the children are beloved for the father's sake. It is, therefore, true, as might be much more fully proved, that by divine appointment the children of believers are introduced into the covenant into which their parents enter with God, and that the promises of that covenant are made no less to the children than to the parents. He promises to be their God, to give them his Spirit, to renew their hearts, and to cause them to live.

This promise, however, like all others of a similar character, is general; expressing what is to be the general course of events, and not what is to be the result in every particular case. When God promised that summer and winter, seed time and harvest should succeed each other to the end of time, he did not pledge himself that there never should be a failure in this succession, that a famine should never occur, or that the expectations of the husbandman should never be disappointed. Nor does the declaration, Train up a child in the way in which he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it, contain a promise that no well disciplined child shall ever wander from the right path. It is enough that it expresses the tendency and ordinary result of proper training. In like manner, the promise of God to give his Spirit to the children of believers, does not imply that every such child shall be made the subject of saving blessings. It is enough that it indicates the channel in which his grace ordinarily flows, and the general course of his dispensations.

Again, it is to be remembered that these promises are conditional. <God has never promised to make no distinction between faithful and unfaithful parents, between those who bring up their offspring in the nurture of the Lord, and those who utterly neglect their religious training.> The condition, which from the nature of the case is implied in this promise, is in many cases expressly stated. His promise is to those who keep his covenant, and to those who remember his commandments to do them. It is involved in the very nature of a covenant that it should have conditions. And although in one important sense, the conditions

of the covenant of grace have been performed by Christ, still its promises are suspended on conditions to be performed by or in his people. And this is expressly declared to be the case with regard to the promise of the divine blessing to the children of believers. They must keep his covenant. They must train up their children for God. They must use the means which he has appointed for their conversion and sanctification, or the promise does not apply to them. Then again, there is a condition to be performed by the children themselves. God promises to be their God, but they must consent to be his people. He promises them his Spirit, but they must seek and cherish his influence. If they renounce the covenant, and refuse to have God for their God, and to walk in the way of his commandments, then the promise no longer pertains to them.

It will naturally be objected, that if this is so, the promise amounts to nothing. If after all, it is not the children of believers as such and consequently all such children who are to be saved; if the promise to them is general as a class and not to each individual; if it is conditioned on the fidelity of parents and of the children themselves, its whole value is gone. What have they more than others? What advantage have the children of the covenant? or what profit is there in baptism? It is precisely thus the Jews reasoned against the apostle. When he proved that it was not the Jews as Jews, and simply because Jews, who were to be the heirs of salvation, and that circumcision could profit them nothing unless they kept the law, they immediately asked: What advantage then hath the Jew, and what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way, answered the apostle,—chiefly because unto them were committed the oracles of God. To them belonged the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service, and the promises: theirs were the fathers, and of them, as concerning the flesh, Christ came. Salvation was of the Jews. All the religion that was in the world was found among them. It was therefore a great advantage to be found among that favoured people, even although from the want of faithfulness, on the part both of parents and children, so many of them perished. In like manner it is a great blessing to be born within the covenant, to be the children of believers—to them belong the adoption and the promises, they are the channel in which the Spirit

flows, and from among them the vast majority of the heirs of salvation are taken notwithstanding the multitudes who perish through their own fault or the fault of their parents.

It is, therefore, a scriptural truth that the children of believers are the children of God, as being within his covenant with their parents, he promises to them his Spirit, he has established a connexion between faithful parental training and the salvation of children, as he has between seed-time and harvest, diligence and riches, education and knowledge. In no one case is absolutely certainty secured or the sovereignty of God excluded. But in all the divinely appointed connexion between means and end, is obvious.

That this connexion is not more apparent, in the case of parents and children is due, in a great measure, to the sad deficiency in parental fidelity. If we look over the Christian world, how few nominally Christian parents even pretend to bring up their children for God. In a great majority of cases the attainment of some worldly object, is avowedly made the end of education; and all the influences to which a child is exposed are designed and adapted to make him a man of the world. And even within the pale of evangelical churches, it must be confessed, there is great neglect as to this duty. Where is the parent whose children have turned aside from God, whose heart will not rather reproach him, than charge God with forgetting his promise? Our very want of faith in the promise is one great reason of our failure. We have forgotten the covenant. We have forgotten that our children belong to God; that he has promised to be their God, if we are faithful to our trust. We do not say that all the children of the most faithful parent, will certainly be saved, any more than we would say that every diligent man will become rich; but the scriptures do say that the children of believers are the subjects of the divine promise, as clearly as they say, the hand of the diligent maketh rich.

This doctrine is clearly implied in the circumcision and baptism of children. Why is the sign and seal of the covenant attached to them, if they are not within the covenant? What are the promises of that covenant but that God will be their God, that he will forgive their sins, give them his Spirit, renew their hearts, and cause them to live? These promises are therefore made to them, and are sealed to them in their baptism, just

as much as they are to their parents. This has been the uniform doctrine of the Christian church. It is avowed in all confessions, and involved in the usages of all communions.

In the Appendix to the Geneva Catechism, in the form for the administration of Baptism, it is said: *Quamobrem etsi fidelium liberi sint ex Adami corrupta stirpe ac genere, eos ad se nihilominus admittit, propter foedus videlicet cum eorum parentibus initum, eosque pro liberis suis habet ac numerat; ob eamque causam jam inde ab initio nascentis ecclesiae voluit infantibus circumcisionis notam imprimi, qua quidem nota jam eadem omnia significabat ac demonstrabat, quae hodie in Baptismo designatur. . . Minime dubium est, quin liberi nostri haeredes sint ejus vitae ac salutis, quam nobis est pollicitus; qua de causa eos sanctificari Paulus affirmat, jam inde ab utero matris, quo ab Ethnicorum et e vera religione abhorrentium hominum liberis discernantur. Belgic confession Act. 34. Nos eos (infantes) eadem ratione baptizandos et signo foederis absignandos esse credimus, qua olim in Israele parvuli circumcidebantur, nimirum propter easdem promissiones infantibus nostris factas. Et revera Christus non minus sanguinem suum effudit, ut fidelium infantes, quam ut adultos ablueret.*

Heidleberg Catechism: Ought young children to be baptized? Yes, because they as well as adults are embraced in the covenant and church of God. And because to them the deliverance from sin through the blood of Christ, and the Holy Ghost, are no less promised than to adults; they should therefore be united by baptism, the sign of the covenant, to the church, and distinguished from the children of unbelievers, as under the Old Testament was done by circumcision, in the place of which baptism is appointed.*

Helvetic Confession. II. 20. *Damnamus Anabaptistas, qui negant baptizandos esse infantulos recens natos a fidelibus. Nam juxta doctrinam evangelicam, horum est regnum Dei, et sunt in foedere Dei, cur itaque non daretur eis signum foederis Dei? cur non per sanctum Baptisma initiarentur, qui sunt peculium et in ecclesia Dei?*

These are only a specimen of the numerous recognitions by the Reformed churches, of the great truth, that the infants of

* This may not agree verbatim with the common English version of this Catechism. It is taken from the German, the only copy we have at hand.

believers are included in that covenant in which God promises grace and salvation. To them these promises are made. There is an intimate and divinely established connexion between the faith of parents and the salvation of their children; such a connexion as authorizes them to plead God's promises, and to expect with confidence, that through his blessing on their faithful efforts, their children will grow up the children of God. This is the truth and the great truth, which Dr. Bushnell asserts. This doctrine it is his principal object to establish. It is this that gives his book, its chief value. This and its consequences render his discourses so appropriate to the present state of the church; for there is perhaps no one doctrine to which it is more important in our day to call the attention of the people of God.

A second truth prominently presented by our author is that parental nurture, or Christian training, is the great means for the salvation of the children of the church. We of course recognise the native depravity of children, the absolute necessity of their regeneration by the Holy Spirit, the inefficiency of all means of grace without the blessing of God. But what we think is plainly taught in scripture, what is reasonable in itself, and confirmed by the experience of the church, is, that early, assiduous and faithful religious culture of the young, especially by believing parents, is the great means of their salvation. A child is born in a Christian family, its parents recognise it as belonging to God and included in his covenant. In full faith that the promise extends to their children as well as to themselves, they dedicate their child to him in baptism. From its earliest infancy it is the object of tender solicitude, and the subject of many believing prayers. The spirit which reigns around it is the spirit, not of the world, but of true religion. The truth concerning God and Christ, the way of salvation and of duty, is inculcated from the beginning, and as fast as it can be comprehended. The child is sedulously guarded as far as possible from all corrupting influence, and subjected to those which tend to lead him to God. He is constantly taught that he stands in a peculiar relation to God, as being included in his covenant and baptized in his name; that he has in virtue of that relation a right to claim God as his Father, Christ as his Saviour, and the Holy Ghost as his sanctifier; and assured that God will recognise that claim and receive him as his child, if he is faithful to his baptismal vows. The

child thus trained grows up in the fear of God; his earliest experiences are more or less religious; he keeps aloof from open sins; strives to keep his conscience clear in the sight of God, and to make the divine will the guide of his conduct. When he comes to maturity, the nature of the covenant of grace is fully explained to him, he intelligently and deliberately assents to it, publicly confesses himself to be a worshipper and follower of Christ, and acts consistently with his engagements. This is no fancy sketch. Such an experience is not uncommon in actual life. It is obvious that in such cases it must be difficult both for the person himself and for those around him, to fix on the precise period when he passed from death unto life. And even in cases, where there is more of conflict, where the influence of early instruction has met with greater opposition, and where the change is more sudden and observable, the result, under God, is to be attributed to this parental training.

What we contend for then, is, that this is the appointed, the natural, the normal and ordinary means by which the children of believers are made truly the children of God. And consequently this is the means which should be principally relied upon, and employed, and that the saving conversion of our children should in this way be looked for and expected. It certainly has the sanction of God. He has appointed and commanded precisely this early assiduous and faithful training of the young. These words, saith the Lord, which I command you this day, shall be in thine hearts: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down and when thou risest up. Ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. As this method of religious training has the sanction of a divine command, so it has also the benefit of his special promise. Success in the use of this means is the very thing promised to parents in the covenant into which they are commanded to introduce their children. God, in saying that he will be their God, give them his Spirit, and renew their hearts, and in connecting this promise with the command to bring them up for him does thereby engage to render such training effectual. Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it, is moreover the express assurance of his word.

There is also a natural adaptation in all means of God's appointment, to the end they are intended to accomplish. There is an appropriate connexion between sowing and reaping, between diligence and prosperity, truth and holiness, religious training and the religious life of children. If the occasional and promiscuous hearing of the word as preached, is blessed to their conviction and conversion, why should not the early, personal, appropriate application of the same truth, aided by all the influence of natural affection, and the atmosphere of a pious home, be expected to be still more effective? How sensibly is a child's disposition and character moulded in other respects by parental example and teaching. How much greater, humanly speaking, is the advantage which a parent possesses than any preacher can have, in his constant intercourse with his child, in his hold on its confidence and love, and in the susceptibility to good impressions which belongs to the early period of life. Surely contact with the world, the influence of evil passions long indulged, of opposition to the truth, to the dictates of conscience, and the strivings of the Spirit, must harden the heart, and increase the difficulties of a sound conversion. In no part of his Discourses nor in his Argument in their defence, is Dr. Bushnell so true or eloquent as in what he says of the natural power of parental influence, even before the development of reason in the child.

"Many persons," he says, "seem never to have brought their minds down close enough to an infant child to understand that anything of consequence is going on with it, until after it has come to language and become a subject thus of *instruction*. As if a child were to learn a language before it is capable of learning anything! Whereas there is a whole era, so to speak, before language, which may be called the era of *impressions*, and these impressions are the seminal principles, in some sense, of the activity that runs to language, and also of the whole future character. I strongly suspect that more is done, in the age previous to language, to effect the character of children, whether by parents, or, when they are waiting in indolent security, by nurses and attendants, than in all the instruction and discipline of their minority afterwards; for, in this first age, the age of impressions, there goes out in the whole manner of the parent—the look, the voice, the handling—an expression of feeling, and that feeling expressed streams directly into the soul, and re-

produces itself there, as by a law of contagion. What man of adult age, who is at all observant of himself, has failed to notice the power that lies in a simple *presence*, even to him? To this power the infant is passive as the wax to the seal. When, therefore, we consider how small a speck, falling into the nucleus of a crystal, may disturb its form; or how the smallest mote of foreign matter, present in the quickening egg, will suffice to produce a deformity; considering, also, on the other hand, what nice conditions of repose, in one case, and what accurately modulated supplies of heat, in the other, are necessary to a perfect product; then only do we begin to imagine what work is going on in the soul of a child during the age of impressions. Suppose now that all preachers of Christ could have their hearers, for whole months, in their own will, after the same manner, so as to move them by a look, a motion, a smile, a frown, and act their own sentiments and emotions over in them; and then, for whole years, had them in authority to command, direct, tell them whither to go, what to learn, what to do, regulate their hours, their books, their pleasures, and their company, and call them to prayer over their own knees every night and morning, who—that can rightly conceive such an organic acting of one being in many, will deem it extravagant, or think it a dishonour to the grace of God, to say that a power like this may well be expected to fashion all who come under it to newness of life?

“Now what I have endeavoured, in my tract, and what I here endeavour is, to waken, in our churches, a sense of this power and of the momentous responsibilities that accrue under it. I wish to produce an impression that God has not held us responsible for the effect only of what we do, or teach, or for acts of control and government; but quite as much, for the effect of our *being what we are*; that there is a plastic age in the house, receiving its type, not from our words but from our *spirit*, one whose character is shaping in the moulds of our own.”

If on this subject we appeal to experience, we shall find that religion has flourished in all ages and in all parts of the church, just in the proportion in which attention has been given to the religious training of the young. God prepared the world for the gospel by a long course of discipline. The law was a school-master to bring men to Christ. The Jews were scattered over the Roman empire to educate a people for the Lord. Every

synagogue was a preparatory school for the church, and it was from among those trained in these schools that the early converts to the gospel, were gathered. In the early church the instruction of the young was made a principal part of parental and ministerial duty. When religion began to decline, and men were taught that baptism wrought the change which God had appointed Christian nurture to effect, then religious education was neglected, and ritualism supplanted piety. When the gospel was revived, Christian nurture revived with it. Catechisms for the young were among the earliest and most effective of the productions of the Reformers. True religion from that day to this has kept pace, risen or declined, just as the training of the young has been attended to or neglected. Scotland is the most religious nation in Europe, because her children are the best instructed. When our missionaries go to the eastern churches or to the heathen, they find preaching to adults like talking to a brazen wall. They begin with the young. They take God's method, and train up a generation to his praise. If we look over our own country, we are taught the same lesson. Religion, what there is of it, is the inconstant and destructive fire of fanaticism, wherever children grow up out of the church and ignorant of God. With him indeed nothing is impossible—and therefore adult heathen, or ignorant and superstitious nominal Christians, are not beyond the reach of his power, and are often made the subjects of his grace; just as the thief was converted on the cross. But a death-bed is not the best place for repentance, nor are ignorant and hardened sinners the most hopeful subjects of conversion.

The truth here asserted has always been recognised in the church. The wisest and best men have known and taught that the ordinary and normal method of bringing the children of believers to the saving obedience of the truth, was Christian training. To this therefore all evangelical churches bind believing parents, by solemn vows, calling upon them to pray with and for their children, to set before them a godly example, and to teach them his word. Why is all this done, if it is not God's appointed means for their salvation? "I doubt not to affirm," says Baxter, "that a godly education is God's first and ordinary appointed means for the begetting of actual faith and other graces in the children of believers. . . . And the preaching

of the word by public ministers is not the first ordinary means of grace to any but those that were graceless till they come to hear such preaching, that is, to those on whom the first appointed means hath been neglected or proved vain." *Christian Directory*, vol. ii. c. 6, 4. "Every Christian family," says Edwards, "ought to be, as it were, a little church, consecrated to Christ, and wholly influenced and governed by his rules. And family education and order are some of the chief means of grace. If these fail, all other means are likely to prove ineffectual." Vol. i. 90.* This principle characteristically governed the conduct of our Presbyterian ancestors both in England and Scotland. They were accustomed to insist much on the relation of their children to the church and the covenant of God, to bring them up under the conviction that they belonged peculiarly to him, were under peculiar obligations, and had a special interest in his promises. They frequently reminded them of this peculiar relation, and called upon to renew their baptismal vows. The excellent Philip Henry, drew up for his children the following baptismal covenant: "I take God to be my chiefest good and highest end. I take God the Son to be my prince and saviour. I take the Holy Ghost to be my sanctifier, teacher, guide and comforter. I take the word of God to be my rule in all my actions; and the people of God to be my people in all conditions. I do likewise devote and dedicate unto the Lord, my whole self, all I am, all I have, and all I can do. And this I do deliberately, sincerely, freely, and forever." "This," says his biographer, "he taught his children, and they each of them solemnly repeated it every Lord's day in the evening after they were catechized, he putting his amen to it, and sometimes adding: 'So say, and so do, and you are made forever.'" Many parents may not be prepared to go as far as Philip Henry, or approve of calling upon children to make such professions, but we have gone to the opposite extreme. So much has this covenanting spirit died out, so little is the relation of our children to God and their interest in his promises regarded or recognised, that we have heard of men who strenuously objected to children being taught the Lord's prayer, for fear they should think God was really their father!

* Both these quotations are borrowed from Dr. Bushnell's *Argument*, pp. 10 and 15.

This shows to what an extent a false theory can pervert not only the scriptures, but even our strongest natural impulses and affections.

There is indeed great danger of this training and especially this covenanting with God degenerating into mere formality and hypocrisy. Parents and children may come to think that religion consists entirely in knowledge and orthodoxy; that they are safe because baptized and included in the church. This tendency was exhibited among the Jews, who thought themselves the true children of God, and heirs of the promise, simply because they were the children of Abraham. It has been exemplified in all ages of the church, and is still seen in many denominations of Christians, even the strictest and most orthodox. Children may be baptized, taught the catechism, and thoroughly instructed and carefully restrained, and thus grow up well-informed and well-behaved, and yet be destitute of all true religion; and what is still worse, deny there is any religion beyond an orthodox faith and moral conduct. This is a great evil. It is not however to be avoided by going to the opposite extreme, denying all peculiarity of relation between the children of believers and the God of their fathers, or undervaluing the importance of Christian nurture. There is no security from any evil, but the grace of God, and the real life of religion in the church. Men are constantly passing from one extreme to another. Neglecting entirely the covenant, or making external formal assent to it, all that is necessary. Our safety consists in adhering to the word of God, believing what he has said, doing what he has commanded, and at the same time looking constantly for the vivifying presence and power of his Spirit. Our children if properly instructed will not be ignorant of the difference between obedient and disobedient children of the covenant. They will be aware that if insincere in their professions or unfaithful to their engagements, they are only the more guilty and exposed to a severer condemnation. Dr. Bushnell says, that what he endeavoured in his Tract, and tried to accomplish in his defence of it, is to waken in our churches, a sense of the power of this early religious training, and of the momentous responsibilities arising under it. This is a high aim. It is a great and good work, and we heartily wish that his book may not fail of its object, so far as this is concerned.

We do not anticipate any dissent from the views hitherto advanced. All Christian parents who dedicate their children to God in baptism, believe them to be included in the covenant, and they do not hesitate to admit the obligation and importance of early religious education and nurture. But the question is, are not these truths practically neglected? Does not a theory of religion extensively prevail which leads believing parents to expect their children to grow up very much like other children, unconverted, out of the church, out of covenant with God, and to rely far less on the peculiar promise of God to them and to his blessing on their religious culture, than on other means, for their salvation? We cannot doubt that this is the case, and that it is the source of incalculable evil. Whether this state of things is to be corrected by rejecting what is wrong in our theory, and letting that regulate our practice; or whether we are to regulate our practice according to the scriptures, and trust to that to correct our theory, it may not be very important to determine. One thing however is certain that, if we act on the principles and rules laid down in scripture respecting Christian nurture, we must modify in some measure our theory of religion, or at least of the way in which it is to be promoted. We believe that all true Christians of every name and church agree substantially in what it is to be a Christian, or wherein Christianity subjectively considered, really consists. It is the recognition and reception of the Lord Jesus Christ as he is presented in the Gospel, and the consequent conformity of our hearts to his image, and the devotion of our lives to his service. It is to apprehend his glory as the only begotten of the Father, as God manifest in the flesh, for our salvation. It is the sincere recognition of him, as the proper object of worship, and the only ground of confidence before God for justification and holiness. It is making him the supreme object of affection, and submitting to him as to our rightful and absolute sovereign. Any man who does this is a Christian; and no man is a Christian, who does not do this, whatever else he may do or be. This of course implies a great deal. It implies regeneration by the Holy Spirit, by which the soul is raised from the death of sin, and is made partaker of a new principle of spiritual life. It implies a deep conviction of sin, leading to the renunciation of confidence in our own righteousness and strength; we must be emptied of ourselves in

education
faith

order to be filled with Christ. It implies such apprehension of the excellence and value of the things of God, as determines our whole inward and outward life, making it on the one hand a life of communion with God, and on the other of active devotion to his service. Now there are two classes of truths clearly revealed in scripture concerning the production and promotion of true religion as thus understood. The one is that it is supernatural in its origin, due to no power or device of man, to no resource of nature, but to the mighty power of God, which wrought in Christ when it raised him from the dead; by which power of the Holy Ghost we are raised from spiritual death and so united to Christ as to become partakers of his life; and that this life, thus divine or supernatural in its origin, is maintained and promoted, not by any mere rational process of moral culture, but by the constant indwelling of the Spirit of Christ, so that it is not we that live, but Christ liveth in us. Religion, therefore, or Christianity subjectively considered, is not something natural, it is not nature elevated and refined, it is something new and above nature; it is what the Bible declares it to be, the life of God in the soul. And therefore as our Saviour teaches us, incomprehensible and mysterious, though not the less real and certain. In intimate connexion and perfect consistency with these truths, there is another class, not less clearly taught in the word of God. This divine, supernatural influence to which all true religion is to be referred, always acts in a way congruous to the nature of the soul, doing it no violence, neither destroying nor creating faculties, but imparting and maintaining life by contact or communion with the source of all life. It is moreover exerted in the use of appropriate means, of means adapted to the end they are intended to accomplish. It operates in connexion with the countless influences by which human character is formed, especially with the truth. It works with and by the truth, so that we are said to be begotten by the truth, and to be sanctified by the truth. There is still another consideration to be taken into view. Human character is determined by a great variety of causes, some within and others beyond the control of the individual. Every man receives at his birth human nature with its hereditary corruption, but that nature as modified by national, family and individual peculiarities. Its developement is determined partly by his circumstances, partly by the energy of his own will, partly by the di-

vine influence of which he may be the subject. Now it is possible that our theory of religion may not embrace all these facts; or if it professes to embrace them all, it may give undue prominence to one and neglect the others. Because religion is supernatural in its origin and support, we may neglect the instrumentalities through which the work is carried on; or because these means are essential and appropriate, we may think the divine influence out of view, or merge it into the power of nature, making grace nothing but nature inhabited by divine energy. Or because our own voluntary agency is so important an element in determining our character and destiny, we may neglect every thing else, and attributing sovereign power to the will, assert that a man is and may become what he pleases by a mere volition. Character is thus made a mere matter of choice, and all influences which operate either prior to the will or independently of it, are discarded.

We think it can hardly be doubted that many of the popular views of religion are one-sided and defective. On the one hand there are many who, influenced by the conviction of the supernatural character of religion, greatly neglect to avail themselves of the instrumentalities which God has appointed for its promotion. Others again, resolve it all into a mere process of nature, or attribute every thing to the power of the will. The former class lose confidence in the effect of religious training, and seem to take it for granted that children must, or at least in all ordinary cases, will, grow up unconverted. They look upon conversion as something that can only be effected in a sudden and sensible manner; a work necessarily distinct to the consciousness of its subject and apparent to those around him. This conviction modifies their expectations, their conduct, their language and their prayers. It affects to a very serious degree both parents and children, and as it arises from false, or at least imperfect views of the nature of religion, it of course tends to produce and perpetuate them. We see evidence of this mistake all around us, in every part of the country and in every denomination of Christians. We see it in the disproportionate reliance placed on the proclamation of the gospel from the pulpit, as almost the only means of conversion; and in the disposition to look upon revivals as the only hope of the church. If these seasons of special visitation are few, or not remarkable in extent or power, religion is always

represented as declining, the Spirit is said to have forsaken us, and all our efforts are directed to secure a return of these extraordinary manifestations of his presence.

We shall not, it is hoped, be suspected of denying or of undervaluing the importance either of the public preaching of the gospel, or of revivals of religion. The former is a divine appointment, which the experience of all ages has proved to be one of the most efficient means for the conversion of sinners and edification of saints. But it is not the only means of divine appointment; and as it regards the children of believers, it is not the first, nor the ordinary means of their salvation, and therefore should not be so regarded, to the neglect or undervaluing of religious parental training. Besides, public preaching is effective, as already remarked, in all ordinary cases, just in proportion to the degree in which this early training has been enjoyed. As to revivals of religion, we mean by the term what is generally meant by it, and therefore it is not necessary to define it. We avow our full belief that the Spirit of God does at times accompany the means of grace with extraordinary power, so that many unrenewed men are brought to the saving knowledge of the truth, and a high degree of spiritual life is induced among the people of God. We believe also that such seasons have been among the most signal blessings of God to his church, from the day of Pentecost to our own times. We believe moreover that we are largely indebted for the religious life which we now enjoy, to the great revivals which attended the preaching of Edwards, Whitfield, and the Tennents; and at a later period, of Davies, Smith and others in Virginia. What however we no less believe, and feel constrained in conscience to say is, that a great and hurtful error has taken fast hold on the mind of the church on this subject. Many seem to regard these extraordinary seasons as the only means of promoting religion. So that if these fail, every thing fails. Others again, if they do not regard them as the only means for that end, still look upon them as the greatest and the best. They seem to regard this alternation of decline and revival as the normal condition of the church; as that which God intended and which we must look for; that the cause of Christ is to advance not by a growth analogous to the progress of spiritual life in the individual believer, but by sudden and violent paroxysms of exertion. We do not believe this,

because it is out of analogy with all God's dealings with men. Life in no form is thus fitful. It is not in accordance with the constitution which God has given up. Excitation beyond a given standard, is unavoidably followed by a corresponding depression. This depression in religion, is sinful, and therefore any thing which by the constitution of our nature necessarily leads to it, is not a normal and proper condition. It may be highly useful, or even necessary, just as violent remedies are often the only means of saving life. But such remedies are not the ordinary and proper means of sustaining and promoting health. While therefore we believe that when the church has sunk into a low state, God does in mercy visit it, with these extraordinary seasons of excitement, we do not believe that it is his will that we should rely upon them as the ordinary and most desirable means for the promotion of his kingdom. This conviction is confirmed by the experience of the church. These revivals are in a great measure, if we may so speak, an idiosyncrasy of our country. They are called *American* revivals. There is nothing American however in true religion. It is the same in its nature, and in its means of progress in all parts of the world. Every one who has paid any attention to the subject, has observed how much religious experience, or the form in which religion manifests itself, is determined by sectarian and national peculiarities. Moravian, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian religion, has each its peculiar characteristics. So has American, Scotch, and German religion. It is very easy to mistake what is thus sectional, arising from the peculiar opinions or circumstances of a church or people, for what is essential. Such peculiarities are due, in almost every instance to something aside from the truth as given in the word of God, and consequently is so far spurious. The very fact, therefore, that these revivals are *American*, that they are in a great measure peculiar to the form of religion in this country, that the Spirit of God, who dwells in all portions of his church, and who manifests himself everywhere in the same way, does not ordinarily carry on his work, elsewhere, by this means, should convince us that this is neither the common nor the best mode in which the cause of religion is to be advanced.)

No one can fail to remark that this too exclusive dependance on revivals tends to produce a false or unscriptural form of reli-

gion. It makes excitement essential to the people, and leads them to think that piety consists in strong exercises of feelings, the nature of which, it is difficult to determine. The ordinary means of grace become insipid or distasteful, and a state of things is easily induced, in which even professors of religion become utterly remiss as to all social religious duties of an ordinary character. We have been told of parts of the church, where the services of the sanctuary are generally neglected, but where the mere notice of a protracted meeting will at once fill the house with hearers, who will come just as long as those meetings last, and then fall back into their habitual apathy and neglect. How serious also is the lesson read to us, by the history of revivals in this country, of their tendency to multiply false conversions and spurious religious experiences. It is surely not a healthful state of the church, when nothing is done and nothing hoped for but in seasons when every thing is thrown out of its natural state, and when the enemy has every advantage to pervert and corrupt the souls of men. Perhaps however the most deplorable result of the mistake we are now considering is, the neglect which it necessarily induces of the divinely appointed means of careful Christian nurture. With many excellent ministers, men who have the interests of their people deeply at heart, it is so much a habit to rely on revivals as the means of their conversion, that all other means are lost sight of. If religion is at low ebb in their congregations, they preach about a revival. They pray for it themselves, and exhort others to do so also. The attention of pastor and people is directed to that one object. If they fail, they are chafed. The pastor gets discouraged; is disposed to blame his people, and the people to blame the pastor. And all the while, the great means of good, may be entirely neglected. Family training of children, and pastoral instruction of the young, are almost entirely lost sight of. We have long felt and often expressed the conviction that this is one of the most serious evils in the present state of our churches. It is not confined to any one denomination. It is a state of things, which has been gradually induced, and is widely extended. It is therefore one of the great merits of Dr. Bushnell's book, in our estimation, that it directs attention to this very point, and brings prominently forward the defects of our religious views and habits, and points out the appropriate remedy, viz: family religion and Christian nurture.

③ There is a third feature of this little tract which gives it great interest and importance in our view. Dr. Bushnell cannot sustain his view of the intimate connexion between the religion of parents and that of their children, without advancing doctrines, which we regard as of great value, and which according to his testimony and other sources of evidence, have been very much lost sight of especially in New England. The philosophy, which teaches that happiness is the great end of creation; that all sin and virtue consists in voluntary acts; that moral character is not transmissible but must be determined by the agent himself; that every man has power to determine and to change at will his own character, or to make himself a new heart; has, as every one knows, extensively prevailed in this country. The obvious tendency and unavoidable effect of this philosophy has been to lower all the scriptural doctrines concerning sin, holiness, regeneration, and the divine life. It represents every man as standing by himself, and of course denies any such union with Adam as involves the derivation of a corrupt nature from him. Divine influence, and the indwelling of the Spirit dwindles down to little more than moral suasion. Union with Christ, as the source of righteousness and life, is left out of view. His work is regarded as scarcely more than a device to render the pardon of sin expedient, and to open the way to deal with men according to their conduct. Attention is turned from him as the ground of acceptance and source of strength, and every thing made to depend on ourselves. The great question is, not what he is and what he has done, but what is our state and what have we done? Religion is obviously something very different according to this view of the gospel, from what it is according to the evangelical scheme of doctrine. The pillars of this false and superficial system are overturned in Dr. Bushnell's book. He has discovered that "Goodness, (holy virtue) or the production of goodness is the supreme end of God." p. 34. "That virtue must be the product of separate and absolutely independent choice, is pure assumption." p. 31. He, on the contrary asserts that "virtue is rather a state of being than an act or series of acts." p. 31. What mighty strides are here! "So glued," says he in his Argument, p. 39, "is our mental habit to the impression that religious character is wholly the result of choice in the individual, or if it be generated by a divine *ictus*, preceded, of absolute

necessity, by convictions and struggles, which are possible only in the reflective age, that we cannot really conceive, when it is stated, the possibility that a child should be prepared for God, by causes prior to his own will." "There was a truth," he says, Discourses p. 42, "an important truth, underlying the old doctrine of federal headship and original or imputed sin, though strangely misconceived, which we seem, in our one-sided speculations, to have quite lost sight of." Very true. But by whom has this important truth been more misconceived, misrepresented and derided than by Dr. Bushnell and his collaborators in New England? "How can we hope," he asks, "to set ourselves in harmony with the scriptures, in regard to family nurture, or household baptism, or any other subject, while our theories include, (exclude?) or overlook precisely that which is the basis of all their teachings and appointments?" A question those must answer, who can. It is precisely this one-sided view of the nature and relation of man, this overlooking his real union with Adam, and consequent participation of his nature and condemnation, that old-school men have been perpetually objecting to the speculations of New England. And we therefore rejoice to see any indication that the truth on this subject has begun to dawn on minds hitherto unconscious of its existence.

If as Dr. Bushnell teaches, character may be derived from parents, if that character may be formed prior to the will of the child; if the child is passive during this forming process, the period of its effectual calling, and emerges into his individuality "as one that is regenerated, quickened into spiritual life,"* (Argument, p. 32,) then of course, we shall hear no more of regeneration as necessarily the act of the subject of it, the decision of his own will; and then too the doctrine of the plenary ability of the sinner to change his heart must be given up. This latter doctrine is indeed expressly repudiated. "The mind," says Dr. Bushnell, "has ideals revealed in itself that are even celestial, and it is the strongest of all proofs of its depravity that, when it would struggle up towards its own ideals, it cannot reach them, cannot apart from God, even lift itself towards them." p. 26. How true, and yet how old is this! Again, "What do theologians understand by a fall and a bondage under the laws of evil, but evil, once entering a soul, becomes its master; so that it can-

* This we intend of course as an argument *ad hominem*, we do not hold to regeneration by parental influence as an organic power.

not deliver itself—therefore that a rescue must come, a redemption must be undertaken by a power transcending nature.” p. 37. Here then we have the avowal of most important truths, truths which sound Presbyterians have ever held dear. Happiness is not the chief good; virtue does not consist entirely in acts, but is a state of being; men are not isolated individuals, each forming his own character by the energy of his will; moral character is transmissible, may be derived passively on the one hand by birth from Adam, and on the other, by regeneration; when sin enters the soul it is a bondage, from which it cannot deliver itself, redemption must come from God. These are comprehensive truths. Dr. Bushnell seems surprised at finding himself in the company into which such avowals introduce him. He endeavours to renounce such fellowship, and to avenge himself, by unwonted sneers at those to whose doctrines he is conscious of an approximation. This can be easily borne. He sees as yet men as trees walking. Whether he will come forward into clearer light, or go back into thicker darkness, we cannot predict. There is much in his book which makes us fear the latter alternative. We hope and pray for the brighter issue.

We have brought forward the two great points in which we agree with our author, the fact of the intimate religious connexion between parents and children, and the primary importance of Christian nurture, as the means of building up the church. On these points, we have dwelt disproportionately long, and left less space and time for the consideration of the scarcely less important parts of the subject.

The fact being admitted that there is a divinely constituted connexion between the religion of parents and that of their children, the question arises, How is this fact to be accounted for? There are three modes of answering this question. The one is that which we have endeavoured to present, which refers the connexion to the promise of God and his blessing on faithful parental training. The second resolves it into a law of nature, accounting for the connexion in question, in the same way or on the same principles, which determine the transmission of other forms of character from parent to children. The third is the ritual or church system, which supposes it is by the rites and ministrations of the church, that this connexion is effected.

We understand Dr. Bushnell to take the second of these

grounds, and to maintain that there is no difference between that and the first. Some, he says, "take the exterior view regarding the result as resting on a positive institution of God. I have produced the interior view, that of inherent connexion and causation. But every theologian, who has gone beyond his alphabet, will see, at a glance, that both views are only different forms of one and the same truth, having each its own peculiar uses and advantages." Argument p. 18. Before stating our view of Dr. Bushnell's system, and our objections to it, it is proper to make two remarks. The first is, that it is very difficult to understand what a writer means, who employs a new terminology. It requires no little time to fix the usage of language, and the reader is very liable to attach to new terms some different shade of thought from that which the writer intended. Besides, it is a very small portion of his own thoughts that an author can spread out upon a written page; there is a fulness within which remains undisclosed, and which nothing short of frequent conference or communication, can adequately reveal. There is therefore a great difference between what a book teaches, and what the author himself may hold. The book teaches what in fact it conveys to the majority of candid and competent readers; though they may not gather from it precisely what the writer meant to communicate. In saying therefore that to our apprehension, Dr. Bushnell's book gives a naturalistic account of conversion or the effect of religious training, we do not mean to assert that he meant to give such an account. The second remark is that he distinctly declares himself to be a supernaturalist. "I meant to interpose," he says, "all the safe-guards necessary to save myself from proper naturalism, and I supposed I had done it. I really think so now. The very first sentence of my tract is a declaration of supernaturalism." p. 36. Again: "So far from holding the possibility of restoration for men within the terms of mere nature, whether, as regards the individual acting for himself, or the parent acting for his child, the incarnation of the Son of God himself is not, as I believe, more truly supernatural than any agency must be, which regenerates a soul." p. 34. Notwithstanding these explicit declarations, it is very possible that he teaches what others mean by naturalism, and that what he calls supernaturalism is something very different from what is commonly understood by that term. There is on page 14, of

the Discourses, a passage which we think is the key to his whole doctrine. "What more appropriate to the doctrine of spiritual influence itself, than to believe that as the Spirit of Jehovah fills all the worlds of matter, and holds a presence of power and government in all objects, so all souls of all ages and capacities, have a moral presence of Divine Love in them, and a nurture of the Spirit appropriate to their wants?" The Spirit of Jehovah is here recognised as everywhere present in nature influencing and governing its operations. On p. 35, of the Argument he speaks of "a supernatural grace which inhabits the organic laws of nature and works its result in conformity with them;" and on p. 32, of "organic power as inhabited by Christ and the Spirit of God;" on p. 38, of "natural laws inhabited by supernatural agencies." This, as we understand these expressions in their connexion, is nothing more than Theism. Dr. Bushnell rejects the mechanical theory of the universe. He is not a naturalist in the sense of the French School, which attribute all effects to the unconscious power of nature; nor in the sense of those who hold that God is entirely external to the world as a mechanist to a machine. He holds that his Spirit is everywhere present and operative in nature, guiding and giving power to mere natural laws. And on this ground he claims, to be a supernaturalist. And so he is, so far as this goes. But this is not supernaturalism in the ordinary sense of the term. There is here no distinction between God's providential agency and the operations of his grace. He is, according to this doctrine, in no other and in no higher sense the author of regeneration than of a cultivated intellect, or of a majestic tree. The intelligence and skill manifested in fashioning a flower, or forming an eye is not in organic laws, but in those laws as inhabited. to use Dr. B's language, by God and his spirit. The result is due to the supernatural element in the power which determines the effect. Now if conversion, if the regeneration and sanctification of the soul, is only in this sense a supernatural work, then it is as much a natural process, as much the result of organic laws, as any other process of nature whatever. This is naturalism, not as distinguished from Theism, but as distinguished from supernaturalism, in the religious sense of the word. The very thing designed by that term is, that conversion and other spiritual changes are effected, not merely by a power above any

thing belonging to nature as separated from God, but by a power other and higher than that which operates in nature. A man may be a theist, he may believe that the world is not a lifeless machine, but everywhere pervaded by the presence and power of God, and yet if he admits no higher or more direct interference of a divine influence in the minds and hearts of men, than this providential agency then he is no supernaturalist. God, according to this view of the subject, is as much the author of depravity as of holiness; for to his providential agency, to his "presence of power and government" all second causes owe their efficiency. Men are not born, their bodies are not fashioned, nor their souls created, without the exercise of his power. The organic laws by which a corrupt nature is transmitted from Adam, or corrupt habits fostered by parents in their children, or by society in its members, or by one man in another man, are inhabited by divine energy. If this therefore is all the supernaturalism of which Dr. Bushnell has to boast, he is not one inch further advanced than the lowest Rationalists. "Pelagianism," says Hase, "found its completion in ordinary Rationalism, which regarded grace as the natural method of providential operation."* And Wegscheider, the most phlegmatic of Rationalists, says: *Operationes gratiae supernaturales recte monuerunt neque accuratius esse definitas, nec diserte promissas in libris sacris, neque omnino esse necessarias, quum, quae ad animum emendandum valeant, omnia legibus naturae a Deo optime efficiantur, nec denique ita conspicuas, ut cognosci certa ratione possint. Accedit, quod libertatem et studium hominum impediunt, mysticorum somnia fovent et Deum ipsum auctorem arguunt peccatorum ab hominibus non emandatis commissorum. Omnis igitur de gratia disputatio ad doctrinam de providentia Dei rectius refertur.* *Institutiones*, §. 152. A passage remarkably coincident in spirit, though much more decorous in form, with one in Dr. Bushnell's *Argument*, p. 35. "If I had handled my subject wholly under the first form, or under the type of the covenant as a positive institution, I presume I should have found a much readier assent, and that for the very reason that I had thrown my grounds of expectation for Christian nurture the other side of the fixed

*Pelagianismus vollendete sich im gewöhnlichen Rationalismus, dem die Gnade als die naturgemässe Wirkungsart der Vorsehung erschien. *Dogmatik*. p. 304.

stars, whereby the parent himself is delivered from all connexion with the results, and from all responsibility concerning them. He will reverently acknowledge that he has imparted a mould of depravity, but the laws of connexion between him and his child are operative, he thinks, only for this bad purpose. If any good come to the child, it must come straight down from the island occupied by Jehovah, to the child as an individual, and does not in its coming take the organic laws of parental character on its way to regenerate and sanctify them as its vehicle. As regards a remedy for individualism, little is gained, even if the doctrine that children ought to be trained up in the way they should go is believed; for there is no effectual or sufficient remedy, till the laws of grace are seen to be perfectly coincident with the organic laws of depravity. Therefore it was necessary to keep to the naturalistic form." This we regard as a pretty distinct avowal that the author admits no divine influence other than that which "inhabits" organic laws. There is no other or higher efficiency in the effects of grace, than in propagation of depravity. If the parent is the mould or vehicle through which a depraved nature flows to his child, by a process just as natural, the believing parent is the vehicle of spiritual life to his offspring.

The account given in his Discourses of the rationale of this connexion between parent and child, confirms our impression that it is regarded as merely natural. "If we narrowly examine" he says, "the relation of parent and child, we shall not fail to discover something like a law of organic connexion, as regards character, subsisting between them. Such a connexion as makes it easy to believe, and natural to expect that the faith of the one will be propagated to the other. Perhaps I should rather say, such a connexion as induces the conviction that the character of the one is actually included in that of the other, as a seed is formed in its capsule; and being there matured, by a nutriment derived from the stem is gradually separated from it. It is a singular fact, that many believe substantially the same thing, in regard to evil character, but have no thought of any possibility in regard to good. . . . The child after birth, is still within the matrix of parental life, and will be more or less for many years. And the parental life will be flowing into him all that time, just as naturally, and by a law as truly organic as when the sap of a trunk flows into a limb. . . . We have

much to say in common with the Baptists, about the beginning of moral agency, and we seem to fancy there is some definite moment when a child becomes a moral agent, passing out of the condition where he is a moral nullity, and where no moral agency touches his being. Whereas he is rather to be regarded, at the first, as lying within the moral agency of the parent and passing out by degrees through a course of mixed agency, to a proper independency and self-possession. The supposition that he becomes, at some certain moment, a complete moral agent, which a moment before he was not, is clumsy and has no agreement with observation. The separation is gradual. He is never, at any moment after birth, to be regarded as perfectly beyond the sphere of good and bad exercises, for the parent exercises himself in the child, playing his emotions, and sentiments, and working a character in him, by virtue of an organic power. And this is the very idea of Christian education, that it begins with nurture or cultivation. And the intention is that the Christian life and spirit of the parents shall flow into the mind of the child, and blend with his incipient and half-formed exercises, and that they shall thus beget their own good within him, their thoughts, opinions, faith and love, which are to become a little more, and yet a little more of his own separate exercise, but still the same in character." Discourses pp. 26—31.

This the author admits is, at least as to its form, a naturalistic account of conversion. And to our apprehension it is so in substance as well as form. "As the Spirit of Jehovah fills all the worlds of matter, and holds a presence of power and government in all objects, so all souls of all ages and capacities, have a moral presence of Divine love in them, and a nurture of the Spirit appropriate to their wants," and it is this natural influence of mind on mind, this power which dwells in all souls according to their character and capacities, that moulds the character of the child, infuses little by little spiritual life into it, and causes it to emerge into its individual existence a regenerated being. Here all is law, organic natural law, as much so, to use his own illustration, as in the transmission of the life of the parent plant to the seed. To be sure the life is not in the plant, the solar heat is necessary to the vitality of the plant and to its transmission to the seed. The effect is therefore not to be referred to the laws of vegetation as independent of solar influence, but the solar in-

fluence is operative through those laws. In like manner the spiritual life of the parent does not exist independently of the Spirit of God, nor can it be transmitted to the child without his influence; but it is nevertheless transmitted in the way of nature, and as the result of organic laws. This, as before remarked, is mere Theism as distinguished from the Deistic or Atheistic theory of nature. There is nothing supernatural in this process, nothing out of analogy with nature, nothing which transcends the ordinary efficiency of natural causes as the vehicles of divine power. There is all the difference between this theory of conversion, and supernaturalism, that there is between the ordinary growth of the human body and Christ's healing the sick, opening the eyes of the blind, or raising the dead. Both are due to the power of God, but the one to that power acting in the way of nature, and the other to the same power acting above nature. And a man who should explain all the miracles of Christ as the result of organic laws, might as well claim to be a supernaturalist, because, he believes God operates in nature, as Dr. Bushnell. The whole question is, whether the effect is due to a power that works in nature, or above nature. The German infidel who refers Christ's miracles of healing to animal magnetism, regards magnetism as a form of divine power, but he is none the less an unbeliever in the supernatural power of Christ on that account.

That Dr. Bushnell's book admits no other or higher influence in regeneration than that power of the Spirit which is present in all worlds, is still plainer, if possible from his defence against the charge of naturalism. It goes no further than a denial of a reference of spiritual life, to organic laws considered apart from a divine influence dwelling in them and operating by them. "It is the privilege of the Christian, not that he is doomed to give birth to a tainted life and cease, but that by the grace of God dwelling in him and the child, fashioning his own character as an organic mould for the child, and the child to a plastic conformity with the mould provided, he may set forth the child into life as a seed after him—one that is prepared unto a godly life by causes prior to his own will; that is, by causes metaphysically organic. Thus every thing previous to the will falls into one and the same category. No matter whether it come through vascular connexion, or parental handling or control, it comes to the child, I said, 'just as naturally and by a law as truly organic,'

(i. e. just as truly from without his own will), 'as when the sap of a trunk flows into a limb.' At some time sooner or later, but only by a gradual transition, he comes into his own will, which theologically speaking, is the time of his birth as a moral subject of God's government; and if he takes up life as a corrupted subject, so he may and ought to take it up as a renewed subject—that is grow up a Christian." Argument, p. 32. In answer to a reviewer in the German Weekly Messenger, he says: "It was my misfortune that all the language of supernaturalism, I might wish to employ, was already occupied by that super-supernaturalism which he has described, and the 'fantastic' impressions connected with the same. In order, therefore, to bring the Spirit and redemption from their isolation, and set them in contact with the organic laws of nature, I was obliged to lean decidedly as the truth would suffer, to naturalistic language, and to set my whole subject in a naturalistic attitude. . . . If I take my position by the covenant of Abraham and hang my doctrine of nurture on that, as a positive institution, or, what is the same, on its promises; if I then contemplate God as coming by his Spirit from a point of isolation above, in answer to prayer, or without, to work in the heart of the child regeneration by a divine stroke or *ictus*, apart from all connexion of cause and consequent, the change called regeneration, and thus to fulfil the promise; I realize indeed a form of unquestionable supernaturalism, in the mind of those who accept my doctrine, but it is likely to be as far as possible from the reviewer's idea, of 'the supernatural in human natural form.' For all the words I have used will have settled into a form proper only to religious individualism. Now just as the reality of the rainbow is in the world's laws prior to the covenant with Noah, so there is in the organic laws of the race, a reality or ground answering to the covenant with Abraham; only, in the latter case, the reality is a supernatural grace which inhabits the organic laws of nature and works its results in conformity with them." Arg. p. 35.

The idea we get from all this is, that as there is at one period a vascular connection between the parent and the child, in virtue of which the life of the one is the life of the other, moulding it into its own image as a human being, so after birth there is a metaphysically organic connexion, in virtue of which just as naturally the spiritual life of the parent becomes that of the

child, so that, when it comes into its own will, it begins or may begin its course a regenerated human being. As the former of these two processes is a natural one, so is the latter; and as the vascular connexion is the vehicle of a divine efficiency, so is the metaphysical connexion, but in both cases that efficiency operates through organic laws. Or, as the rainbow is a product of natural laws, so it is a result of those laws that children should participate in the character and moral life of their parents; and as there would have been a rainbow whether God had ever promised it or not, so children would be like their parents, whether God had ever made a covenant to that effect or not. In both cases there is a natural "connexion of cause and consequent." Now it is precisely this connexion, in the case of regeneration, that supernaturalism denies. Any result brought about in the natural concatenation of cause and consequent, is a natural effect. Any result brought about by an influence out of that connexion, is a supernatural effect. The controversy with the infidel, is whether the works of Christ were brought about in the natural series of cause and consequent; and the controversy with the Rationalist or Pelagian, is whether regeneration is a natural sequence or not; whether its proximate antecedent, its true cause, is nature or grace, some organic law, or the mighty power of God. These two views are as far apart as the poles. They cannot be brought together, by saying God is in nature as well as in grace, for the two modes of his operation is all the difference. The whole question is, whether God operates in any other way than through nature. The naturalist says no, and the supernaturalist says, yes.

We are confirmed in our impression that we do not misinterpret Dr. Bushnell, by the ridicule which he heaps on the idea of any immediate interference of the Spirit of God. This he speaks of as God's coming from a state of isolation above, from beyond the fixed stars, from an island where he dwells. This he stigmatizes as the *ictic* theory, "Hanging," as he says Edwards does in his account of regeneration, "every thing thus on miracle, or a pure *ictus Dei*, separate from all instrumental connexions of truth, feeling, dependence, motive, choice, there was manifestly nothing left but to wait for the concussion. It was waiting, in fact, as for the arrival of God in some vision or trance, and since there was no intelligible duty to be done, as means to the end, the disturbed soul was quite sure to fall to conjuration to obtain the

desired miracle; cutting itself with the knives of conviction, tearing itself in loud outcries, and leaping round the altar and calling on the god to come down and kindle the fire." Argument p. 14. There is surely no mistaking such a passage as this. To us it sounds profane. It is ridiculing the doctrine that God operates on the soul otherwise than through the laws of nature. He therefore disclaims all belief in instantaneous conversion,* he appears to have no faith in what he calls an explosive religion, which comes suddenly with convictions and struggles. The whole tenor of his book is in favour of the idea that all true religion is gradual, habitual, acquired as habits are formed. Every thing must be like a natural process, nothing out of the regular sequence of cause and effect. If Dr. Bushnell really denied what is commonly understood by experimental religion, if he had no faith in conversion by supernatural influence, and meant to place himself on the Rationalistic side of all these controversies, he could hardly have more effectually accomplished his object, than by setting as he has done his "whole subject in a naturalistic attitude." Surely it ought not to be a matter of doubt on which side of such questions such a man stands.

The true character of the theory of religion taught in this department of his book, is further apparent from two additional considerations. In the first place, the author not unfrequently speaks "of generalizing the doctrines of grace and depravity, so as to bring them into the same organic laws." Argument p. 33. He teaches that "the laws of grace" are "perfectly coincident with the organic laws of depravity." p. 36. Now as Dr. Bushnell does not hold that depravity is propagated by any supernatural agency of God, we do not see how he can claim that grace is thus communicated, the laws which regulate both being identical. We take these passages to mean that as it is by a process of nature that depravity is communicated from parents to children, as this is the result of organic laws, so by a like process spiritual life is communicated from the parent to the child.

* "Take the doctrine (which I frankly say I do not hold) that regeneration is accomplished by an instant and physical act of God, to which act truth and all endeavours in the subject have no other relation, as means to ends, than the rams horns had to the fall of Jericho. Yet that instant, isolated act of Omnipotence may fall on the heart of infancy, as well as of adult years, and God may give us reason to expect it." Argument p. 33.

The result is brought about in both cases by parental character and treatment, as an organic power.

The second consideration is, that he avows it as one of his objects, to present the most comprehensive form of truth possible, so as to include the most discordant views. He says, "I had a secret hope before hand of carrying the assent of Unitarians." "In drawing up my view of depravity as connected with organic character, and also in speaking of what I supposed to be their theory of education, I did seek to present the truth in such a way that all their objections might be obviated." p. 27. He therefore exults in their approbation, and hopes they may approve every sentiment he may hereafter publish. He advocates towards them a very different course from that which has been hitherto adopted. He urges that great truths should be presented in such a shape as to secure their acceptance. Now it seems to us that all this argues either such an elevation that all differences of doctrine are lost sight of, as mountains and valleys seem one great plain to the aeronaut, or a great indifference to the truth. He must either suppose that the orthodox and unitarians are like children, disputing about words, when they really agree, had they only sense enough to know it; or that the points of difference are of so little importance they may be dropped in a statement of the truth common to both. Either of these assumptions is not a little violent. It is not likely that Pelagians and Augustinians in all ages have held the same doctrine without knowing it, waiting until some philosophical mind should arise to frame a statement satisfactory to both parties. Nor is it probable that the difference between them, if real, is now for the first time, to be shown to be of no account. Dr. Bushnell has done nothing. He has not advanced an inch beyond Pelagius. The latter was willing to call nature grace, and the former calls nature supernatural, and wishes unitarians and orthodox to consider that a solution of the whole matter. Unitarians are agreed, but the orthodox demur. And well they may, for supernatural nature is but nature still, and if salvation comes through nature, Christ is dead in vain and we are yet in our sins. Such compromises are nothing more nor less than ill-disguised surrender of the truth. And the truth is the life of the world.

Dr. Bushnell after quoting from various writers, passages

teaching, as he has taught, the intimate religious connexion between parents and children, and the paramount importance of Christian nurture, turns on the Massachusetts committee and speaking of his opponents, says: "These censors of orthodoxy have raised an out-cry, they have stirred up a fright, and driven you to the very extreme measure of silencing a book—in which it turns out they have been stirring up their heroism against Baxter and the first fathers of New England, against Hopkins, West, Dwight, and I know not how many others, to say nothing of the ancient church itself, as understood by the most competent critics. . . . And now what opinion will you have, what opinion will all sensible men have, two years hence, of this dismal scene of fatuity, which in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and forty-seven, has so infected the nerves of orthodox Massachusetts as even to stop the press of her Sabbath School Society?" But how comes it that while Unitarians agree with Dr. Bushnell, they do not agree with Baxter, Hopkins, West or Dwight? Have they all along been mistaken as to what the orthodox taught, until Dr. Bushnell presented the subject in its true light? The fact is Dr. Bushnell is under a great mistake. The complaint against his book is not for what he has in common with Baxter and Dwight, it is not his teaching that the piety of the parent lays a scriptural foundation for expecting the children to be pious, nor that Christian nurture is the great means of their conversion, but it is for the explanation he has undertaken to give of these facts. It is because he has not rested them upon the covenant and promise of God, but resolved the whole matter into organic laws, explaining away both depravity and grace, and presented the "whole subject in a naturalistic attitude." It is this that renders his book so attractive to Unitarians, and so alarming, with all its excellencies, to the orthodox.

Our understanding of Dr. Bushnell's theory of Christian nurture is then this. Men do not exist as isolated individuals, each having his life entirely within himself, and forming his character by his own will. There is a common life of the race, of the nation, of the church, and of the family, of which each individual partakes, and which reveals itself in each, under a peculiar form, determined partly by himself and partly by the circumstances in which he is placed. As the child derives its animal life from its

parents, with all its peculiarities, so also he derives his moral and spiritual life from the same source. The organic connexion does not cease at birth, but is continued until the child becomes an intelligent, conscious, self-determining agent. Its forming period is prior to that event, during which it is in a great measure the passive subject of impressions from the parent, whose inward, spiritual life, of what sort it is, passes over or is continued in the child. Such is the condition in which men are born into this world, and such the power of the life of the parent, that natural pravity may be overcome by Christian nurture, and a real regeneration effected by parental character and treatment as an organic power.

Every one sees there is a great deal of truth in this, and that most important duties and responsibilities must grow out of that truth. But at the same time it is both defective and erroneous as a full statement of the case. It rests on a false assumption of the state of human nature, and of the power of Christian nurture. It assumes that men are not by nature the children of wrath, that they are not involved in spiritual death, and consequently that they do not need to be quickened by that mighty power which wrought in Christ when it raised him from the dead. The forming influence of parental character and life is fully adequate to his regeneration; education can correct what there is of natural corruption. In answer to the objection that this is the old Pelagian, Rationalistic theory of human nature and conversion, it is said, the Spirit of Jehovah fills all worlds, and every thing is due to his presence and power. This, however, is only saying that second causes owe their efficiency to God; a truth which few naturalists, and even few infidels, deny. This, therefore may be admitted, and yet all supernatural influence in the regeneration of men denied.

It can hardly be questioned that the Bible makes a broad distinction between that agency of God by which the ordinary operations of nature are carried on, and the agency of his Spirit in the conversion and sanctification of men. The same distinction has always been made in the church. In all controversies concerning grace, the question has been, whether apart from the influence of natural causes considered as the ordinary modes of the divine efficiency, there is any special and effectual agency of the Spirit in the regeneration of men. Dr. Bushnell may choose to

overlook this distinction, and claim to be a supernaturalist because he believes God is in nature, but he remains on the precise ground occupied by those who are wont to call themselves Rationalists.

We have already adverted to the difference which may exist between what a book teaches and what its author believes. This book to our apprehension teaches a naturalistic doctrine concerning conversion. The author asserts that he holds to the supernatural doctrine on that subject. He is of course entitled to the benefit of that declaration. All we can say is that he seems to use the terms in a different sense from that in which they are commonly employed, and that there is enough of a rationalistic cast about it to account for all the disapprobation it has excited, and to justify the course of the Massachusetts committee. For although it contains much important truth powerfully presented, and although it inculcates principles, considering the source whence they come, of no little significance and value, yet a book which in its apparent sense denies everything supernatural in religion, could hardly be expected to circulate with the approbation of any orthodox society.

Having presented what we consider the true ground of the admitted connexion between believing parents and their children, and considered Dr. Bushnell's views on the subject, it was our purpose to call attention to the church or ritual doctrine. This however, we can barely state. The church doctrine admits original sin, and the insufficiency of nature, or of any power operating in nature, for the regeneration of men. This power is found in the church. As all men partake of the life of Adam, by their natural birth, so they are made partakers of the life of Christ by their spiritual birth. He by his incarnation has introduced a new principle of life, which continues in the church which is his body. And as baptism makes us members of the church, and therefore members of the body of Christ, it thus makes us partakers of his life. Just as a twig engrafted into a tree partakes of its life, so a child engrafted by baptism into the church partakes of the life of Christ. It is this life thus supernaturally communicated, which is to be developed by Christian nurture, and not any thing in the soul which it has by nature. This doctrine is presented in various forms more or less gross or philosophical, according to the character and training of its advocates. It is however everywhere essentially the same whether

propounded at Rome, Oxford, or Berlin. The German philosophical form of the doctrine bids fair to be the popular one in this country, and is advanced with the contemptuous confidence which characterises the school whence it emanates. Every thing which is not ritual and magical is pronounced rationalistic. Nothing is regarded as spiritual but grace communicated by external acts and contacts. The true doctrine of Protestants which makes faith necessary to the efficacy of the sacraments, is denounced as Puritan, which is rapidly becoming a term of reproach. This doctrine rests on a false view of the church. The external body of professors is not the body of Christ, which consists only of believers. Transferring to the former the attributes and prerogatives which belong to the latter, is the radical error of Romanism, the source at once of its corruption and power. It rests also on a false view of the sacraments, attributing to them an efficacy independent of faith in the recipient. It assumes a false theory of religion. Instead of the free unimpeded access of the soul to Christ, we are referred to the external church as the only medium of approach. Instead of the life of God in the soul by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, it is the human nature of Christ, the second Adam, of which we must partake. The whole doctrine is nothing but a form of the physical theory of religion. It is a new anthropology palmed upon men, as the gospel. We are constantly reminded of the remark of Julius Müller that all attempts to spiritualize nature, end in materializing spirit. A remark which finds a striking illustration in the new philosophy in its dealings with religion. Its most spiritual theories serve only to reduce the principle of divine life to the same category with animal life, something transmissible from parent to child, or from priest to people. There is great reason to fear that religion, under such teaching, will either sink into the formal ritualism of Rome, or be evaporated into the mystic Rationalism of Germany. Schleiermacher, whose views are so zealously reproduced, and between which and his own Dr. Bushnell seems often at a loss to choose, taught that Christ introduced a new life-principle into the world. Human nature corrupted in Adam, was restored to perfection in Him. That life still continues in the church, just as the life of Adam continues in the race. Christianity is the perfection of nature, as Christ was the perfection of manhood. It is not with the historical, personal Christ that we have communion, any more than it is with Adam as an individual man with

whom we have to do. Both are reduced to a mere power or principle. Christ as the Son of God is lost. So also in his system the Holy Ghost, is not a divine person, but "the common-spirit," or common sentiment of the church. The Holy Spirit has no existence out of the Church, and in it is but a principle. In this way all the precious truths of the Bible are sublimated into unsubstantial philosophical vagaries, and every man pronounced a Rationalist, or what is thought to be the same thing, a Puritan, who does not adopt them.

Though we have placed the title of Dr. Tyler's Letter to Dr. Bushnell at the head of this article, the course of our remarks has not led us into a particular consideration of it. This is not to be referred to any want of respect. The subject unfolded itself to us in the manner in which we have presented it, and we should have found it inconvenient to turn aside to consider the particular form in which Dr. Tyler has exhibited substantially the same objections to Dr. Bushnell's book. Dr. T. however seems to make less of the promise of God to parents than we do, and to have less reliance on Christian nurture as a means of conversion. We are deeply impressed with the conviction that as to both of these points there is much too low a doctrine now generally prevailing. And it is because Dr. B. urges the fact of the connexion between parents and children, with so much power, that we feel so great an interest in his book. His philosophy of that fact we hope may soon find its way to the place where so much philosophy has already gone.

ART. IV.—*The Apostolical Succession.* *author?*

IN opposition to the doctrine, that Presbyterian ordination is invalid because not derived from a superior order of ministers. there is a twofold argument, negative and positive. The negative argument is founded on the fact, that there is no order of church-officers existing by divine right superior to Presbyters; that no such order can exist as the successors of the primitive Bishops, for these were identical with the primitive Presbyters; nor as successors of the Apostles, for these, as such, had no suc-