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Julio Fürstio

ART. I.—*Concordantiae Librorum Veteris Testamenti Sacrorum Hebraicae atque Chaldaicae, &c. &c.* Auctore Julio Fürstio, Doct. Phil. Lipsiae. 1837-8. Sect. I—VIII.

THE appearance of great literary undertakings, whether deserving of the name from the novelty or importance of their subjects, or from the amount of patient labour or of original thought expended in their execution, may appropriately be compared to that of eminent individuals in the political world. For as these latter exert a powerful influence upon the character and conduct not only of the men among whom they live and move, but also of their posterity to distant times : so important literary achievements, while thousands of ordinary publications are suffered to sink into oblivion, remain as monuments of the intellectual prowess of the age in which they are produced, and serve as guides and helpers to future advances in knowledge, virtue, and happiness. Hence it is highly proper that their appearance and character be recorded in literary history for the benefit of posterity as well as of contemporaries, in like manner as those of celebrated men are preserved in the history of political events. These

at the time, this was heard by Matthias Stoius, then Dr. Luther's table-companion, but afterwards Doctor of Medicine, and body-physician to the old Duke of Prussia, who many times related it to the Duke, in the presence of many distinguished people of quality."

With this characteristic incident we close our notice of the work, hoping at some future day to follow the history to its conclusion.

Charles Hodge

ART. III.—*A Brief History and Vindication of the Doctrines received and established in the Churches of New England, with a specimen of the New Scheme of Religion beginning to prevail.* By Thomas Clap, A.M., President of Yale College. New Haven, 1755.

OUR readers may be somewhat surprised at seeing, as the heading of this article, the title of a book published near a century ago. The character of this periodical, however, does not restrict us to the notice of works of a recent date. The past is the mirror of the present, as the present is of the future. What is now, has been before, and shall be hereafter. It is well, at times, to look back and see how the trials of our forefathers agree with our own; to observe how the errors and disorders with which we have to contend afflicted them; to notice how the methods adopted in former ages to secure the introduction of false doctrines answer to the devices of the present day; and how signally God blessed the faithful efforts of his servants in defence of his truth, and how uniformly compromise and subserviency have been followed by the triumph of error and the decline of religion. The history of the church is replete with instructions on all these points; and these instructions are presented in the history of the church in our own country in a form peculiarly adapted to our present circumstances. The pious founders of the Congregational and Presbyterian churches in America brought with them the very doctrines which the friends of truth in those churches are now struggling to maintain; they had to contend with the same errors and disorders, and they resisted them by the same means which we are now endeavouring to employ, viz. testimony, discussion and discipline. Their fidelity produced just the same outcry about ecclesiastical

tyranny, inquisitorial powers, freedom of thought, march of intellect, new discoveries, with which the ears of the public are now assailed. The same plea of essential agreement, of mere *shades* of difference, of the evils of controversy, was urged then, as now. But, blessed be God, not with the same success. The men of those generations did not allow themselves to be either frightened or beguiled. And as long as they retained their courage and fidelity their efforts were crowned with success.

There is another instructive feature in the history of the last century. Those who could not endure sound doctrine, would not endure sound discipline. As soon as they had departed from the faith, they got their eyes wide open to the evils of ecclesiastical authority. This opposition to supervision manifested itself in Connecticut in two ways. Some objected to the examination into the doctrinal opinions of ministers, or to the exercise of discipline for the prevailing errors; while others withdrew from the consociated churches and set up for themselves. These separatists called themselves strict Congregationalists. One of their standing subjects of complaint was the supervision of the consociation. This was found to be very inconvenient. It is readily admitted that many Christians have honestly and from good motives preferred the purely independent system of church government, yet there can be no doubt that then, as now, many who advocated that system did it because of the convenient latitude which it affords for all kinds of doctrine.

So much has been said of late years of the contentions in the Presbyterian church; such assiduous efforts have been made to produce the impression that there is either some great evil in Presbyterianism, or that its present advocates are peculiarly and wickedly bigotted, that we have thought it wise, and likely in various ways to be useful, to recall attention to one chapter of the ecclesiastical history of Connecticut. It will be seen that so long as there is a regard for divine truth and for real religion in the church, there will be controversy and contention when errorists arise and endeavour to propagate their doctrines. There can be no surer sign of degeneracy than the peaceful progress of error. If, therefore, the same or analogous errors and disorders, which a century ago agitated many parts of New England to its centre, are now allowed to prevail without opposition, it will prove to all the world that the faith and the spirit of the Puritans have perished among their descendants. It is not

our intention, though largely in the debt of a certain class of our New England brethren, to read them a lesson out of their own history. It is not for their benefit so much as for our own, that we bring to the notice of our readers President Clap's Defence of the Doctrines of the New England Churches. It will serve to confirm the purpose and strengthen the faith of the friends of truth in our church, to see that they are fighting the same battle which has once before been fought and won, and that on New England ground. It will serve to refute the calumny of those who represent the struggle in our church, as an opposition to genuine New England doctrines. It will show that we are now opposing what all sound and faithful Puritans ever have resisted; and that the reproaches which we now suffer were just as freely lavished on New England men a hundred years ago.

There is so little in this pamphlet which is not directly applicable to the present times, that we shall do little more than extract its contents, giving, it may be, an occasional remark, by way of application or improvement.

"The great motive," says President Clap, "which induced the first planters of New England, to leave their pleasant European seats, and settle in this howling wilderness, was, that they might enjoy religion in the purity of its doctrines, discipline and worship, and transmit the same down to the latest posterity. The doctrines which they believed and professed, were those which had been generally established in all ages of the Christian church; and more especially summed up, and declared in the several confessions of faith, in the various churches of the protestant Reformation; though there were some lesser circumstances in their ecclesiastical discipline, which were in some measure peculiar to themselves. For the sake of these inestimable privileges, they undertook to settle a new and uncultivated country, filled with the most savage and barbarous enemies; and nothing but these religious prospects could induce them to believe that they did not purchase it at too dear a rate. And the leaving the gospel in its purity, they judged to be a better inheritance to their posterity, than the valuable soil which they acquired with such incredible hardship, danger and fatigue: therefore any attempt to deprive them of their religion, is as injurious as to deprive them of their lands, or to change their happy form of civil government.

"Soon after their first settlement, there was a general Synod of the elders and messengers of all the churches in New

England, in the year 1648, wherein they unanimously declared their sentiments in the doctrines of the gospel, in these words, *viz.* 'This Synod, having perused and considered, (with much gladness of heart, and thankfulness to God,) the Confession of Faith lately published by the Reverend Assembly in England, do judge it to be very holy, orthodox and judicious in all matters of faith; and do therefore freely and fully consent thereunto, for the substance; only in matters of church government and discipline, we refer ourselves to the platform of church discipline agreed upon by this assembly.' And accordingly published it as 'their Confession of Faith, and as the doctrine constantly taught and professed in these churches.'

"In their preface they say, 'that it has been the laudable practice of the churches of Christ, in all ages, to give a public account to the world, of the faith and order of the gospel among them; and that it has a tendency to public edification, by maintaining the faith entire in itself, and unity and harmony with other churches.'

"Our churches, say they, believe and profess the same doctrine which has been generally received in all the reformed churches in Europe. I suppose the Assembly's Catechism was not expressly mentioned, because before this it had been generally received and taught to children.

"A few years after there was a Synod of Congregational churches held at the Savoy, in London; wherein they consented to the Westminster confession aforesaid; only they left out some things relating to church discipline and divorce, and amended some few expressions. This is called the Savoy Confession.

"A general Synod of the elders and messengers of the churches in New England, in 1680, approved of and consented to this confession; and the general court at Boston ordered it to be printed 'for the benefit of the churches in the present and after times.' The Synod, in their preface, say, 'That it must needs tend much to the honour of the blessed name of the Lord Jesus, when many churches join together in their testimony for the truth. That the Lord hath signally owned the confessions of the four first general councils or Synods for the suppression of heresies in the primitive times. That the confessions of the Bohemians, Waldenses, and other Protestant reformed churches (which also show what harmony of doctrine there is among all sincere professors of the truth) have been of singular use, not only to those

who then lived, but also to posterity, even to this day. That it must needs be a work pleasing unto God, for his servants to declare to the world, what those principles of truth are, which they have received, and purpose to live and die in the profession of; nor are they worthy of the name of Christians, who refuse to declare what they believe.' They conclude with these words, 'What hours of temptation may overtake these churches, is not for us to say; only the Lord doth many times so order things, that when his people have made a good confession, they shall be put upon the trial, some way or other, concerning their sincerity in it. The Lord grant, that the loins of our minds may be so girt about with truth, that we may be able to withstand in an evil day, and having done all to stand.

"In the year 1690, there was a meeting of the Presbyterian and Congregational ministers in England, who, agreeing perfectly in points of doctrine, compromised those small circumstantialia wherein they had disagreed in church discipline. This they published under the title of, *Heads of Agreement assented to by the united Ministers formerly called the Presbyterian and Congregational*. In which they declare their approbation of 'the doctrinal articles of the church of England; the Confession of Faith; the larger and shorter Catechisms composed by the assembly of divines at Westminster, and the Savoy Confession, as agreeable to the word of God.'

"In the year 1708, there was a general Synod of all the churches in the colony of Connecticut, assembled by delegation, at Saybrook, in which they unanimously consented to the Savoy Confession, and the heads of agreement before mentioned; and drew up some articles for the administration of church discipline. One principal thing wherein these articles differed from what had been before generally received and practiced in the New English churches, was this, that whereas the Cambridge platform had said in general terms, that councils should consist of the neighbouring churches, and some questions had arisen who should be esteemed the neighbouring churches, and what number should be called in particular cases: these articles reduced it to a greater certainty, that councils should consist of the neighbouring churches in the county; they forming themselves into one or more consociations for that purpose.

"These three things, viz. the Confession of Faith; Heads of Agreement, and Articles of Church Discipline, were presented to the General Court at Hartford, in May 1708; and

they declared their great approbation of them, and 'ordain, that all the churches in this government, thus united in doctrine, worship and discipline, shall be owned and acknowledged established by law.'

"The Synod of Saybrook, in their preface, say, that 'the usage of the Christian church, whose faith rested wholly on the word of God, respecting confessions of faith, is very ancient; and necessary for the correcting, condemning, and suppressing of heresy and error. For this purpose, ancient and famous confessions of faith have been agreed upon by Oecumenical councils, e. g. of Nice, against Arius; of Constantinople, against Macedonius, &c. That the several reformed nations agreed upon confessions of faith, famous in the world, and of special service to theirs and the succeeding ages. That the faith of these churches is the same which was generally received in all the reformed churches in Europe. This confession of faith, they say, they offer as their firm persuasion, well and truly grounded on the word of God, and commend the same to the people of this colony, to be examined, accepted and constantly maintained. That having applied the rule of holy Scripture to the articles of this confession,* and found the same to be the eternal truths of God, you remember and hold them fast: *contend earnestly for them, as the faith once delivered to the saints*: value them as your great charter: the instrument of your salvation, and the evidence of your not failing of the grace of God, and of your receiving a crown that fadeth not away. Maintain them, and every of them, all your days, with undaunted resolution, against all opposition, whatever the event may be; and the same transmit safe and pure to posterity; having bought the truth, sell it not: believe the truth will make you free. Faithful is he that hath promised. Let no man take away your crown.'

"In this state our pious fore-fathers established the pure religion of Christ in this land, and left it as the best legacy to their posterity. They were doubtless men of great piety; fervent in prayer, and assiduous in studying the sacred Scriptures, in order to find out the truth, and recommend it to their posterity. They did not undertake to make a religion, but to declare it from the word of God: nor did they suppose that their faith or belief should be the ground and

* "By this is meant, not the applying those few texts of Scripture only, which are set in the margin, (for it is probable they were not put there by the Assembly of Divines) but every text of Scripture applicable to these articles."

foundation of ours, but resolved all into the authority of God speaking in his word.

“Among the various means they used to propagate this pure religion to their posterity, they esteemed the erecting of colleges and subordinate schools, to be the principal. To this purpose the general synod at Boston, in 1679, fully express their sentiments. ‘That we read of schools and colleges in scripture; 1 Chron. 25: 8, Mal. 2: 12, Acts 19: 9, and 22: 3. That Samuel, Elijah, and Elisha, were presidents of the schools of the prophets; 1 Sam. 19: 18. That Ecclesiastical History informs us, that great care was taken by the apostles, and their immediate successors, to settle schools at all places; that so the interest of religion might be preserved, and truth propagated to all succeeding generations. We have reason to bless God, who hath put it into the hearts of our fathers, to take care in this matter; for these churches would have been in a deplorable state, if the Lord had not blessed the college, so as thence to supply most of our churches.’

“‘When the people in New England were poor, and but few in number, there was a spirit to encourage learning; and as we desire that religion should flourish, it concerns us to endeavour that the college and inferior schools be duly inspected and encouraged.’ Thus far that synod.

“The fathers of the colony of Connecticut, from the same pious and religious design, erected a college among themselves in the year 1701: the scheme was concerted principally by the ministers, with an especial design to maintain and propagate that pure religion, which was before settled among them; as appears by sundry letters to and from those ministers who first undertook to found this school, dated before the charter, and still extant.

“The charter is predicated, ‘upon the petition of sundry well-disposed persons, of their *sincere regard to and zeal for upholding and propagating of the Christian Protestant religion, by a succession of learned and orthodox men.*’ And the grant was made, ‘to encourage such a *pious and religious undertaking.*’ At their first meeting they came into the following solemn act.

“At a meeting of the collegiate undertakers, holden at Saybrook, November 11, A.D. 1701, present, the Revs. Israel Chauncey, Thomas Buckingham, Abraham Pierson, Samuel Andrew, James Pierpoint, Noadiab Russel, Joseph Webb.

“‘Whereas it was the glorious public design of our now

blessed fathers, in their remove from Europe into these parts of America, both to plant, and under the Divine blessing, to propagate in this wilderness the blessed reformed Protestant religion, in the purity of its order and worship; not only to their posterity, but also to the barbarous natives: in which great enterprise they wanted not the royal commands and favour of his majesty king Charles the Second, to authorize and invigorate them.

“ ‘ We, their unworthy posterity, lamenting our past neglects of this grand errand, and sensible of the equal obligations better to prosecute the same end, are desirous in our generation to be serviceable thereunto.

“ ‘ Whereunto the religious and liberal education of suitable youth is, under the blessing of God, a chief and most probable expedient. Therefore, that we might not be wanting in cherishing the present observable and pious disposition of many well-minded people, to dedicate their children and substance unto God in such a good service: and being ourselves with sundry other Reverend Elders, not only desired by our goodly people, to undertake as trustees, for erecting, forming, ordering and regulating a collegiate school, for the advancement of such an education: but having also obtained of our present religious government, both full liberty and assistance, by their donations to such an use: tokens likewise that particular persons will not be wanting in their beneficence: do, in duty to God, and the weal of our country, undertake in the aforesaid design. And being now met, according to the liberties and aids now granted to us for the use aforesaid; do order and appoint, that there shall be, and hereby is erected and formed a collegiate school, wherein shall be taught the liberal arts and languages, in such place or places in Connecticut, as the said trustees with their associates and successors, do or shall, from time to time, see cause to order.

“ ‘ For the orderly and effectual management of this affair, we agree to, and hereby appoint and confirm the following rules:

“ ‘ 1st. That the rector take special care, as of the moral behaviour of the students at all times, so with industry, to instruct and ground them well in theoretical divinity; and to that end, shall neither by himself, nor by any other person whomsoever, allow them to be instructed and grounded in any other system or synopsis of divinity, than such as the said trustees do order and appoint: but shall take effectual

care, that the said students be weekly, at such seasons as he shall see cause to appoint, caused memoriter to recite the Assembly's Catechism in Latin, and Ames's Theological Theses; of which, as also Ames's Cases, he shall make, or cause to be made, from time to time, such explanations as may (through the blessing of God,) be most conducive to their establishment in the principles of the Christian Protestant religion.

“ 2d. The rector shall also cause the Scripture daily (except on the Sabbath) morning and evening, to be read by the students at the times of prayer in the school, according to the laudable order and usages of Harvard College, making expositions upon the same: and upon the Sabbath, shall either expound practical theology, or cause the non-graduated students to repeat sermons; and in all other ways according to his best discretion, shall at all times studiously endeavour, in the education of the students, *to promote the power and purity of religion and the best edification of these New England churches.*’

“ The founders of the college, and their successors, have upon several times and occasions, come into some further and more explicit resolves, in pursuance to the original fundamental plan; particularly,

“ At a meeting of the trustees of Yale College, in New Haven, October 17, 1722: present, the Rev. Messrs. Samuel Andrew, Timothy Woodbridge, Samuel Russell, Joseph Webb, John Davenport, Thomas Buckingham, Stephen Buckingham, Thomas Ruggles, Eliphalet Adams.

“ 16. Voted, That all such persons as shall hereafter be elected to the office of rector or tutor in this college, shall, before they are accepted therein, before the trustees, declare their assent to the confession of faith owned and consented to by the elders and messengers of the churches in the Colony of Connecticut, assembled by delegation at Saybrook, Sept. 9, 1708, and confirmed by act of the General Assembly; and shall particularly give satisfaction to them, of the soundness of their faith, in opposition to Arminian and Prelatical corruptions, or any other of dangerous consequence to the purity and peace of our churches: but if it cannot be before the trustees, it shall be in the power of any two trustees, with the rector, to examine a tutor, with respect to the confession and soundness of faith, in opposition to said corruptions.

“ 17. Voted, That upon just ground of suspicion of the rector or tutor's inclination to Arminian or Prelatic princi-

ples, a meeting of the trustees shall be called, as soon as may be, to examine into the case.

“ 18. Voted, That if any other officer or member of this college shall give just grounds of suspicion of their being corrupted with Arminian or Prelatical principles,* or of any other of dangerous consequence to the peace and purity of our churches, the rector and tutors shall call them upon examination according to the articles of the said confession; and in case they refuse to submit thereto, or do not give a satisfactory account of their uncorruptness, they shall suspend them to the next meeting of the trustees.’

“ N. B. Five of the first founders were at this time alive, and four present at the passing of these acts.

“ At a meeting of the president and fellows of Yale College, November 21, 1751, present, the Rev. Mr. Thomas Clap, President: the Rev. Messrs. Jared Eliot, Joseph Noyes, Anthony Stoddard, Benjamin Lord, William Russel, Thomas Ruggles, Solomon Williams, and Noah Hobart, Fellows.

“ Whereas the principal design of the pious founders of this college was to educate and train up youth for the ministry in the churches of this Colony, according to the doctrine, discipline and mode of worship received and practised in them; and they particularly ordered, that the students should be established in the principles of religion, and grounded in polemical divinity, according to the Assembly’s Catechism, Dr. Ames’s Medulla, and Cases of Conscience, and that special care should be taken, in the education of students, not to suffer them to be instructed in any different principles or doctrines; and that all proper methods or measures should be taken to promote the power and purity of religion, and the best edification and peace of these churches:

“ We, the successors of the said founders, being in our own judgments, of the same principles in religion with our predecessors, and esteeming ourselves bound in fidelity to the trust committed to us, to carry on the same design, and

* “ By Prelatical principles, I suppose, they intend, the opinion that Prelacy or Episcopacy is, by divine right, absolutely necessary to the being of the Christian ministry and church; which opinion being entirely subversive of these churches which the college was founded to support; those who endeavour to propagate it, counteract the fundamental design of the college: but such as suppose, that Episcopacy is only most convenient, as tending to maintain unity and order, and don’t nullify Presbyterian ordination (which is the opinion of the greatest part of the church of England, in England), may consistently be admitted members of our college, and to the communion of our churches too, as has been the practice ever since there have been churchmen in the Colony.”

improve all the college estate descended to us, for the purposes for which it was given, do explicitly and fully resolve, as follows, viz.

“ 1. That the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the only rule of faith and practice, in all matters of religion, and the standard by which all doctrines, principles and practices in religion are to be tried and judged.

“ 2. That the Assembly's Catechism and the Confession of Faith, received and established in the churches of this Colony (which is an abridgement of the Westminster Confession), contain a true and just summary of the most important doctrines of the Christian religion; and that the true sense of the sacred Scriptures is justly collected and summed up in these compositions: and all expositions of Scripture, pretending to deduce any doctrines or positions, contrary to the doctrines laid down in these composures, we are of opinion are wrong and erroneous.

“ 3. If any doubt or dispute should happen to arise about the true meaning and sense of any particular terms or phrases in the said composures, they shall be understood and taken in the same sense in which such terms and phrases have been generally used in the writings of Protestant divines, and especially in their public confessions of faith.*

“ 4. That we will always take all proper and reasonable measures, such as Christian prudence shall direct, to continue and propagate the doctrines contained in these summaries of religion, in this college, and to transmit them to all future successions and generations; and to use the like measures to prevent the contrary doctrines from prevailing in this society.

“ 5. That every person who shall hereafter be chosen a president, fellow, professor of divinity, or tutor, in this college, shall, before he enters upon the execution of his office, publicly give his consent to the catechism and confession of faith, as containing a just summary of the Christian religion, as before expressed, and renounce all doctrines or principles contrary thereunto: and shall pass through such an examination as the corporation shall think proper, in order to their being fully satisfied that he shall do it truly without any evasion or equivocation.

* “The general rule of interpreting all writings, is, that words and phrases shall be taken in the same sense in which they are commonly used in other writings upon the same subject.”

“6. That since every such officer is admitted into his post upon the condition aforesaid, if he shall afterwards change his sentiments, entertain any contrary set of principles or scheme of religion, and disbelieve the doctrines contained in the said catechism or confession of faith, he cannot, consistent with common honesty and fidelity, continue in his post, but is bound to resign it.

“7. That when it is suspected by any of the corporation, that any such officer has fallen from the profession of his faith, as before mentioned, and is gone into any contrary scheme of principles, he shall be examined by the corporation.

“8. That inasmuch as it is especially necessary, that a professor of divinity should be sound in the faith; besides the common tests before mentioned, he shall publicly exhibit a full confession of his faith, drawn up by him in his own words and phrases, and shall in full and express terms renounce all such errors as shall in any considerable measure prevail at the time of his introduction; and if any doubt or question shall arise about any doctrine or position, whether it be truth or error, it shall be judged by the word of God taken in that sense of it which is contained and declared in the said catechism and confession of faith; as being a just exposition of the word of God in those doctrines or articles which are contained in them.*

“9. That every person who shall be chosen president, fellow, professor of divinity, or tutor in this college, shall give his consent to the rules of church discipline established in the ecclesiastical constitution of the churches of this Colony: it being understood, that our ecclesiastical constitution may admit of additions or alterations, in such circumstances as according to our confession of faith are to be regulated by the light of nature, and the rules of Christian prudence. And it is especially declared, that if any person shall deny the validity of the ordination of ministers of this Colony, commonly called Presbyterian or Congregational, or shall hold, that it is necessary or convenient that such ministers should be re-ordained, in order to render their administrations valid, it

* “This does not make the catechism and confession the rule of expounding Scripture (as some have suggested), for the best rule of interpreting Scripture, is the Scripture itself, i. e. comparing one place with another. See Confession, Chap. 1. Sect. 9. It was principally by this means, the Assembly found out the true meaning of Scripture, and expressed and declared it in those compositions.”

shall be deemed an essential departure from our ecclesiastical constitution, and inconsistent with the intentions of the founders of this college, that such a person should be chosen an officer in it.

“‘10. Yet, we would suppose, that it is not inconsistent with the general design of the founders, and is agreeable to our own inclination, to admit Protestants of all denominations to send their children to receive the advantage of an education in this college: provided that while they are here, they conform to all the laws and orders of it.’”

As we understand this matter these statutes were in force until within a few years. It has been said indeed that the usage of the institution, since the accession of President Stiles in 1773, allowed of considerable latitude in this subscription; that the substance of the confession is all that any officer was required to assent to. In reference to this subject the Rev. Daniel Dow of Connecticut, in the appendix to his pamphlet on the New Haven Theology, asks the following question: “Whether the ancient Confession of Faith be not a part of the constitution of Yale College, upon which the funds of the college are established. And if it be, whether the Corporation have any more right or authority to alter it, or repeal it, or to accept of any asciticious creeds as containing the substance of it, than any other corporate body has to alter the conditions of their charter?” We presume Mr. Dow had a right to ask this question. We have never heard whether he has been favoured with an answer. It would seem however that the Dwight Professor of Theology must be greatly straitened in order to avail himself of the liberal usage above referred to. It seems the founders of that professorship required that “Every professor who shall receive the income or the revenue of this fund, shall be examined as to his faith, and be required to make a written declaration thereof, agreeably to the following, ‘I hereby declare my free assent to the Confession of Faith and Ecclesiastical Discipline agreed upon by the churches of the state in the year 1708.’” They further say, “If at any future period, any person who fills the chair of this professorship, holds or teaches doctrines contrary to those above referred to, then it shall be the duty of the Corporation to dismiss such person from office forthwith.” We are no further interested in this matter than the New Haven gentlemen are in the affairs of the Presbyterian church; or than the whole Christian com-

munity is interested in the maintainance of good faith and true religion. We proceed with our extracts.

“The body of the ministers in the Colony of Connecticut, in their public conventions, have several times renewed their consent to their Confession of Faith; particularly at the general council at Guilford, in 1742, and at the general association at Fairfield, 1753, in these words:

“ ‘ We recommend it to the particular associations, that they be very careful, that the true and great doctrines of the gospel, agreeable to the Confession of Faith, be maintained and preached up, against the Arminian, Antinomian, and other errors, and that especial care and pains be taken with our youth, to instruct them in the principles of our holy religion, and articles of our faith.’

“At a general association of the Colony of Connecticut at Middletown, June 17, 1755, present, the Rev. Messrs. Jared Elliot, *Moderator*; Benjamin Colton, John Graham, William Worthington, Solomon Williams, Jacob Elliot, Noah Hobart, Elnathan Whitman, Nathaniel Eells, Jonathan Todd, Edward Eells, Joseph Bellamy, Noah Welles, James Beebe, Izrahiah Wetmore.

“ ‘ This association apprehending that various errors, contrary to the doctrines owned in the churches of this Colony, are spreading and prevailing in the land, and that it is highly necessary for ministers to bear testimony against those prevailing errors; this association earnestly recommend it, to the particular associations of this colony, to agree among themselves, frequently to insist upon these doctrines contained in our Confession of Faith, which are contrary to the prevailing errors of the day; and particularly that they would bear a sufficient testimony against Socinianism, Arminianism, Arianism, Pelagianism, and Antinomianism, or any other errors that may arise among us.

“ ‘ And whereas one particular association of this colony, have declined coming into the proposal of a general consociation, till the several associations have declared their adherence to the Confession of Faith owned in our churches; we freely declare our adherence to the doctrines contained in our Confession of Faith, and we would recommend it to particular associations strictly to adhere to the doctrines of our Confession of Faith.’

“It was the practice of the once famous French Protestant churches, at every meeting of their national Synod, to read and give their assent to their Confession of Faith; and pro-

mise to preach according to it.* And it might be well if this was practised among us; notwithstanding the opposition made by those who dislike the doctrines.

“Although the Protestant churches in general, and those of New England in particular, have been thus fully fixed and established in the pure doctrines of the gospel, yet sundry persons of late have risen up openly to oppose and deny them; and have by various means endeavoured to introduce a new scheme of Religion, and an easy way of salvation, unknown to the gospel of Christ. To this purpose a great variety of books have been written, either expressly denying, or artfully endeavouring to misrepresent, perplex, and undermine the great doctrines of the gospel. Although those authors do not perfectly agree among themselves, yet their scheme is in the main, tolerably consistent with itself, in as much as the denying of some of the doctrines of the gospel (amongst which there is a necessary connection) naturally undermines and destroys all the rest.

“I shall present the reader with a general view of this new scheme of religion, as I some years ago collected it from the writings of Chubb, Taylor, Foster, Hutcheson, Campbell and Ramsey, and other books, which are by some highly extolled and assiduously spread about the country.

“The only end and design of the creation is the happiness of the creature: and this end shall certainly be attained, so that all rational creatures shall finally be happy; or at least, taken together as a body, shall be as happy as they can possibly be; and if some individual should be eternally miserable, it is because it is beyond the power of God to make them happy; it being impossible, that a creature should be happy against its will, and the will cannot be immediately changed without destroying the nature of the agent. God has no authority over his creatures as creator, but only as benefactor, and has no right to command his creatures, but only so far as he annexes rewards to obedience, and makes it their interest to obey: the only criterion of duty to God is self-interest; and God commands us to do things, not out of any regard to his own glory or authority, but merely because the things commanded, naturally tend to promote our own interest and happiness. That he annexes penalties only for the good of the creature, and the only end of punishment is the

* “See Quick’s Synodicon.”

good of those upon whom it is inflicted; or, at least, for the good of the system of moral agents in general.

“The natural tendency which things have to promote our own interest, is the sole criterion of moral good and evil, truth and falsehood, right and wrong, duty and sin. That sin consists in nothing but a man’s doing or forbearing an action contrary to his own interest; and duty to God, is nothing but the pursuit of our own happiness, with this view, that it is the will of God that we should be happy.

“We ought to have no regard to God, but so far as he is or may be a means or instrument of promoting our own happiness, and that to act from a view to the glory of God, his perfection, authority or laws considered as over and above, beside or distinct from our own happiness, is but a chimæra; it being impossible that any moral agent can have any rational view or design, but only its own happiness.

“Since the nature of all sin consists in man’s doing what he knows to be contrary to his own interest and happiness: every sin must be known and voluntary; and consequently there can be no sin of ignorance, derivation or imputation; nor any sinful nature, state or disposition. That Adam was not created in a state of holiness, but only had a power to act virtuously, that is, to pursue his own interest, if he pleased: that he had in his original constitution, strong dispositions and inclinations to do acts that were sinful, i. e. contrary to his own interest, and he could not refrain from those particular acts without considerable pain and uneasiness: that God gave him inclinations which he ought not to gratify, and that an inclination to sin, being the gift of God is no sin, but is designed for the exercise of his virtue in restraining of it.

“Every man is now born into the world in as perfect a state of rectitude as Adam was created; and has no more of a disposition to sin than he had; and in all respects stands as fair for the favour of God as Adam did; not being obliged to be conformed to any standard of moral perfection, but only to pursue his own interest and happiness.

“And though it should be supposed, that men have some weaknesses now, which Adam had not at first; yet nothing can be a man’s duty which is not now in his power, even

* “The author of Heaven open to all men, says, if our appetites are irregular, he who gave them is responsible for them.”

though he has lost it by his own fault; for the law is abated in proportion with the power to obey.

“Adam, in a state of innocence, being liable to sickness, wounds and death; there is reason to suppose, that the special providence of God would interpose to preserve him from them. The present miseries and calamities of human life are no evidences of a sinful state, or tokens of God’s displeasure; but are primarily designed as means for the trial of men’s virtue, and to make them capable of a reward.

“Every man has a natural power to prosecute his own interest, and to do all that is necessary to be done by him for his own happiness. The actions of moral agents can be neither virtuous, vicious or free, unless they are done by a man’s own power, nor unless he has also a power to do the contrary; and therefore it is absurd to suppose, that God should implant grace or holiness in any man, or keep him from sin, or decree or foreknow his actions; because all these suppositions destroy the free agency of a man, and consequently his moral virtue.

“That God cannot certainly foreknow the actions of free-agents; because they are not in their own nature foreknowable; they not depending upon any antecedent causes, but merely upon the free and self-determining power of the will.

“Since sin is nothing else but a man’s not pursuing his own interest so well as he might, no punishment is properly and justly due to him; but only that he should suffer the natural ill consequences of his own misconduct; consequently no satisfaction is necessary in order to the forgiveness of sin; and therefore Christ did not die to make satisfaction for sin, and so there is no need to suppose him to be essentially God, but only a most perfect and glorious creature.

“The great design of the gospel, and of Christ’s coming into the world, was to revive the light of nature, and to cultivate moral virtue, which had been greatly obscured by Jewish and heathenish superstitions, and to give men more full assurance, that if they endeavoured to promote their own interest in this world, they should be happy in the next, than the mere light of nature could do: and therefore there is no great weight to be laid upon men’s believing Christ’s divinity, satisfaction, or any of those speculative points, which have been generally received as the peculiar and fundamental doctrines of the gospel (some of which are prejudicial to moral virtue), but we ought to have charity for all men, let

their speculative principles be what they will, provided they live moral lives, whether they be Papists, Jews, Mahomedans or heathens: or, at least, for all that say they believe the Bible, though* they put no certain meaning to it, or construction upon it; but only that they believe it to be a good system of morality, and don't profess to believe any thing more about Christ, than the Mohamedans generally do.

“And some have charity for all who are willing to be happy, and have a benevolent temper towards their fellow-men, though they do not so much as believe the being of a God: yea, some extend their charity to the devils themselves, so far as to suppose, that though they are at present very much out of the way, yet they shall at length see their error, and all be finally happy in heaven: and pretend to produce plain demonstration for it in this form:

“The ultimate end and design of God in the creation, is the happiness of the creature.

“God's ultimate end and design never can be finally frustrated or defeated; therefore all intelligent creatures shall finally be happy.”

Here let the reader pause. Let him review this new scheme of religion and ascertain its leading features. He will find that what we call new now was called new a hundred years ago, and for the same reason. The doctrines were no more new then than they are at present; but it was a new thing that those doctrines should be avowed in the midst of orthodox churches. The reader cannot fail to notice, that every doctrine characteristic of the system which is now agitating the country, is embraced in the scheme which pious and orthodox men of New England were called to oppose during the last century. These doctrines are, 1. That the promotion of happiness is the grand end of creation. 2. That self-interest is the ultimate foundation of moral obligation. 3. That God cannot control the acts of moral agents, or prevent sin in a moral system. 4. That he cannot, of course, decree the acts of free agents. 5. That all sin consists in the voluntary transgression of known law; consequently that there is no such thing as a holy or unholy nature. Adam was not created holy, but formed his own moral character; and his posterity are not born corrupt, but become corrupt by their own voluntary transgression of known law. 6. That plenary

* “These call themselves Bibliarians,”

ability and full power to the contrary are necessary to the morality of any act.

There are some points embraced in the new scheme as given by President Clap, which do not belong to the new divinity of our day; as, for example, the speculations about the divinity of Christ; and there are some which belong to the new divinity, as, for example, making regeneration to consist in the choice of God, as a source of happiness, or in a change of purpose, which are not expressly stated, though they are implied in the new scheme of the last century. It would be easy, and perhaps useful, to point out the striking coincidence, even in language, between these two schemes, did our limits permit.* We must content ourselves here with a very few illustrations. With regard to the first point, President Clap remarks, "This fundamental principle, 'That the happiness of the creature is the sole end of creation,' naturally leads to most if not all the rest." We are afraid this is too true, though many who adopt this principle, or at least the theory of virtue of which it is the expression, repudiate many or all of these consequences. It is a strange perversion to make happiness the end, and holiness but a means; as though enjoyment were superior to excellence. The theory that virtue is founded in utility; that a thing is right simply because of its tendency to promote happiness; this tendency being not merely the evidence of its excellence, but that excellence itself, is the copious fountain of speculative errors, and of perversion of the moral feelings. If happiness is the great end of creation; if any thing is right that promotes happiness, then the end sanctifies the means, and it is right to do evil that good may come. If it is right for God to act on this principle, it is hard to make men feel that it is wicked for them to do so. The only difficulty is, that they may not have knowledge enough to enable them to apply the principle correctly, but the principle itself must be good. We think it might easily be made to appear that the theology and morals of the church have suffered severely from the adoption of this false theory of virtue.

That this theory is a constituent part of the new divinity is plain from almost every page of the writings of the advocates of that system. "Why is righteousness or justice,"

* This is the less necessary, however, as our readers have access to the admirable letters on the origin and progress of the New Haven Theology, from a New England minister to one at the South; to Mr. Dow's pamphlet on the New Divinity, and to Mr. James Wood's work, entitled, *Old and New Theology.*

asks the *Christian Spectator*, "better than injustice?" After rejecting other answers, he says, "We must come back to the tendency to good or evil, pleasure or pain, happiness or unhappiness. The same relation is implied in saying, that righteousness or justice is better, or preferable to injustice or oppression. How better? In what respect preferable? What fitness or adaptedness has it, unless to good? and what is good, except as it tends to promote happiness?"* According to this doctrine there is no such thing as morality. Pleasure is the only good, and pain the only evil. There are means of pleasure, and causes of pain; but there is no such thing as sin or holiness. There is no specific difference between beauty and moral excellence; between a crime and a burn. There is, however, no more sense in asking, as is done by the *Spectator*, "How righteousness is better than injustice?" than in asking, how pleasure is better than pain? Every sentient being knows that pleasure is better than pain; and every moral being knows that righteousness is better than injustice. No reason need be given in either case. Right is as much a primary idea as pleasure. If a man had never felt pleasure it would be in vain to make him understand it; and if a man has no moral sense, he can have no conception of the meaning of the terms right and wrong. To tell him that right is the quality of any act which tends to produce happiness; and wrong of one which tends to produce pain, would make him think these words synonymous with expedient and inexpedient, agreeable and disagreeable. It would convey no idea of the specific meaning of the terms. Happiness is the mere shadow of virtue. It must always follow it. But virtue is no more defined, by saying that it is that which tends to produce happiness; than the nature of a solid body is defined by saying, it is that which casts a shadow.

People are very apt to imagine that they gain a victory, when they ask a question which does not admit of an answer. This is a great mistake. We are no more concerned because we cannot tell an inquirer what there is in virtue besides its tendency to produce happiness, than we are because we cannot tell a deaf man the difference between a loud sound and a bright colour. The difficulty does not arise from the identity of the two things, but from a want of capacity in the questioner to perceive the difference. Such interrogations,

* *Christian Spectator*, vol. 10, p. 538.

therefore, as those of the Spectator, produce in us no other feeling than that of wonder how they can be put by any man with a moral sense.

But the plague-spot of the new divinity is the second point above specified, the principle that self-interest is the ultimate foundation of moral obligation. This is its point of alliance with the lowest form of speculative opinions on this subject, and which gives it a character which must degrade the moral and religious feelings of every human breast in which it gains a lodgement. This offensive doctrine is not only incidentally stated, or indirectly implied, it is formally propounded and vindicated in writings of recognised authority in reference to the new divinity. Thus we are told, "This self-love or desire of happiness is the primary cause or reason of all acts of preference or choice, which fix supremely on any object." And more plainly still, "Of all specific, voluntary action the happiness of the agent, in some form, is the *ultimate end*."* Can there be a human heart which does not revolt at such a monstrous assertion? Has every act of piety, every deed of benevolence, every attention of maternal love, the happiness of the agent as its ultimate end? The assertion contradicts the consciousness of every human being. All religion, all benevolence, all the social affections do not centre in self. Any man whose own happiness is the ultimate end of all his specific voluntary actions, is a bad man. If such a being could be found, he would not deserve the name of a man. Every one performs a multitude of acts because they are right; and in which the happiness of others and not of himself is the ultimate end. It may be said, we do not analyse our feelings with sufficient accuracy. We have, however, no faith in this analysing one thing into another; a sense of right into a desire of happiness; self-denial into self-seeking; the love of God into the love of self. We pray to be delivered from all such metaphysics.

Lest our readers should think that we assume, on too slight grounds, that this doctrine is a part of the new scheme of religion of our days, we refer them to an article on moral obligation in the last number of the Christian Spectator. They will find it there taught that "the ultimate foundation of moral obligation is the tendency of an action to promote the highest happiness of an agent, by promoting the highest welfare of all," p. 531. The last clause of the sen-

* Christian Spectator, 1829. p. 21, 24.

tence has nothing to do with the doctrine. The ground of obligation is the tendency of the act to promote the happiness of the agent. The fact that his happiness is best secured by acts which tend to promote the highest welfare of all, is not, according to the theory, the reason of their being obligatory. And this the article teaches with abundant plainness. The nature of the doctrine taught is clear from the whole drift of the piece; and will be sufficiently indicated to the reader by such sentences as the following, "It will perhaps be said, that by making moral obligation to rest on the tendency to promote the highest happiness of the agent, we make it wholly a *selfish* thing," p. 541. "Perhaps it may here be said, if this is the evil of sin—the disregard of the agent's highest welfare—and if this often times results from a state of ignorance, then the only remedy necessary is to supply the requisite knowledge—to enlighten the mind," p. 550. It is taught no less explicitly that the primary reason why we are bound to obey God is, that he knows best what will make us happy. Nay, we are told that it has been said, by at least one advocate of the new divinity, that if the devil could make him happier than God can, he would serve the devil.* It is hard to conceive how he could serve the devil more effectually than by making such declarations, which, after all, are only an irreverent statement of the doctrine of the Christian Spectator. On p. 529, the question is started, Why ought we to obey the will of God? After a good deal of circumlocution, it comes out that this obligation rests on his wisdom and benevolence, that is, upon his knowing what will render us most happy, and upon the assurance which his benevolence affords, that he will not deceive us as to this point. "The rule," we are told, exists, "and what its foundation is we have seen. As a matter of fact, it exists, however it may be made known, and the tendency, or bearing, or relation to happiness, whence it arises would exist, even if the rule or law was unknown. It is the province of the moral governor to make this truth known and to sustain it. The fact that he is such a being, that he is competent to the task, forms a reason, why he should be obeyed. In this competency, his capacity to judge what is best, what is most productive of good or of happiness, and his disposition to do it, in other words his infinite wisdom and benevolence, is the prime element to be taken into

* We would not state this on slight grounds. We have received it from a source on which entire reliance may be placed.

the account," p. 537. On a previous page it was said, that if there was "no feeling of gratification in the act (of obedience to God) the force of obligation would be unfelt." And on 538, it is asked, "On what ground is obedience claimed? It is that the law is holy, just, and *good*. The very reason that God assigns is, that it is *good*, that it is the surest way of making us most happy. [The words *holy*, and *just*, it seems, have no meaning for this writer.] His declaration in the form of law, is the highest evidence which we have of the fact, for it is the testimony of one who sees in all things the end from the beginning, and who has no disposition to mislead us, but who with all the sincerity of infinite love, seeks to promote our highest happiness. Men do not distinguish between God's competency to discern and to make known to us the way of happiness, and his creating a particular line of conduct right or wrong." Again, "Does any one hold that the will of God is the foundation of moral obligation, we show, that this, when carefully examined, can mean nothing more than the objective ground, or the indication or proof to us, wherein our true welfare lies, so as to supply to us our defect of knowledge," p. 543. According to this doctrine there is in fact no such thing as moral obligation in the universe. A man is bound to promote his own happiness in the best way he can, and this is his whole duty. All his obligation is to himself. He owes nothing to God, or to his fellow men. It is expedient for him to observe the divine directions, but he is bound to do so, only so far as they promote his own welfare. We would fain hope that such a doctrine needs no refutation in a Christian country. Its naked statement is enough to secure its reprobation.

The third specification given above is, That God cannot control the acts of free agents, or that he could not prevent the introduction of sin into a moral system. "It is a groundless assumption," says Dr. Taylor, "that God could have prevented all sin, or at least the present degree of sin in a moral system. . . . Would not a benevolent God, had it been possible to him in the nature of things, have secured the existence of universal holiness in his moral kingdom."* "Free moral agents," says the Christian Spectator, "can do wrong under every possible influence to prevent it."† "God not only prefers on the whole, that his creatures should forever perform their duties rather than neglect them, but pro-

* Concio. p. 28.

† Vol. 1830, p. 563.

poses on his part to do all in his power to promote this very object."* God, it is said, determined on his present course of providence, "not for the sake of redemption in the universe, rather than have a universe without sin; but for introducing redemption into a universe from which sin could not, by any providence, be excluded."† "The nature of things, as they now exist, forbids, as far as God himself is concerned, the more frequent existence of holiness in the place of sin."‡ "The prevention of sin did not enter into his determination because he saw it to be impracticable," p. 15. "It is to him a subject of regret and grief, yet men transgress; they rebel in spite of his wishes; they persevere in sin in spite of all which he can do to reclaim them," p. 19.

Fourth, that the assumption that God cannot effectually control the acts of moral agents, is inconsistent with the doctrine of decrees, is too evident to need remark. The doctrine is therefore rejected, though the terms, for the sake of convenience, or for some other reason, are retained. That God decrees that an event should occur, and yet "proposes to do all in his power" to prevent its occurrence no one can believe. It may permit its occurrence, or submit to it rather than destroy the system, but to say that he decrees it, appears to be a contradiction. The statement of the doctrines of predestination and election given by the New Haven writers and others of the same school, is in accordance with this fundamental principle of their system, and is a virtual denial of those doctrines. "Whatever degree or kind of influence," says the *Spectator*, "is used with them (sinners) to favour their return to him, at any given time, is as strongly favourable to their conversion as it can be made amid the obstacles which a world of guilty and rebellious moral agents opposed to God's works of grace."§ In another place, the writer, speaking of the influence which operates on the sinner, says, "Election involves nothing more, as it respects his individual case, except one fact—the certainty to the divine mind, whether the sinner will yield to the means of grace, and voluntarily turn to God, or whether he will continue to harden his heart until the means of grace are withdrawn." That is, God exerts an influence on sinners as strongly favourable to their conversion "as it can be made," and he knows who will

* *Ch. Spect.* 1832, p. 660.

† *Ch. Spect.* p. 635.

‡ Sermon by Edward R. Tyler, New Haven, 1829, p. 9.

§ See Review of Dr. Fiske's Sermon on Predestination and Election.

yield, and this is election! To the same effect Mr. Tyler teaches "God foresees whom he *can* make willing in the day of his power, and resolves that they shall be saved," p. 14. And Mr. Finney, "The elect were chosen to eternal life, because God foresaw that in the perfect exercise of their freedom they could be induced to repent and embrace the gospel."* It is really surprising that the New Haven divines should still assert that they hold the doctrines of predestination and election in the ordinary sense of the terms. President Fiske, in answer to the review of his sermon in the *Christian Spectator*, justly complains of this unfairness. "I cannot," he says, "but express my deepest regret that a gentleman of the reviewer's standing and learning should lend his aid, and give his sanction to such a perversion of language, to such a confusion of tongues. Do the words predestinate, foreordain, decree, mean in their radical and critical definition, nothing more than to permit, not absolutely to hinder, to submit to as an unavoidable and offensive evil? . . . Why then should the reviewer, believing as he does, continue to use them in the symbols of his faith? . . . His mode of explanation turns the doctrine into Arminianism."

Fifth, that all sin consists in the voluntary transgression of known law. This is so much a favourite topic with the writers of this class, that it is hardly necessary to bring examples. As they explain and apply the principle, it involves the denial both of original righteousness and original sin. "Neither a holy nor a depraved nature is possible," says Dr. Beecher, "without understanding, conscience and choice. To say of an accountable creature that he is depraved by nature, is only to say, that rendered capable by his Maker of obedience, he disobeys from the commencement of his accountability."† "It is obvious," says Mr. Duffield, "that in infancy and incipient childhood, when none of the actions are deliberate, or the result of motive, operating in connexion with the knowledge of law, and of the great end of human actions, no moral character can appropriately be predicated."‡ "Why then is it necessary," asks the *Christian Spectator*, "to suppose some distinct evil propensity, some fountain of iniquity in the breast of the child previous to moral action?"§ "Animals and infants previous to moral agency, do therefore stand on precisely the same ground in

* Sermons on Important Subjects, p. 25.

† Sermon on the Native Character of Man.

‡ Regeneration, p. 378.

§ *Christian Spectator*, 1829, p. 367.

reference to this subject." The doctrine of "a native propensity to evil," according to Dr. Taylor, makes "God the responsible author of sin," destroys responsibility, &c. &c. See his Review of Dr. Tyler in the Christian Spectator, 1832. It is useless to multiply quotations.

Sixth, that plenary ability and full power to the contrary are necessary to the morality of any act. There are three views of the doctrine of ability. The old one is, "That man by his fall into a state of sin hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation; so as a natural man, being altogether averse from that which is good, and dead in sin, is not able by his own strength to convert himself, or to prepare him thereunto." Inasmuch as the inability here spoken of is very different from that under which a man lies to create a world, and inasmuch as it results from sin or the moral state of the agent, it may properly be called moral. On the other hand, as fallen man is a free moral agent, as the things to be done do not transcend his nature as a man, there is a sense in which he may be said to have a natural ability to obey all the commands of God. So long as the expression natural ability was used in this sense, there was no controversy as to the thing, but only as to the propriety of the terms. There are two prominent objections to this form of expression. The one is the perpetual and puzzling contradictions in which it involves the preachers of the gospel; who tell sinners in the same breath, they can and they cannot; as well as the incongruity of saying that a man is able to do what it is admitted that, in another and equally true and important sense, he is unable to do. It is always an evil to have the declarations of ministers come into conflict with the consciousness of their hearers. A man may, metaphysically speaking, be said to have a natural ability to love one person as well as another, yet to tell him, he *can* love all persons alike, he feels to be absurd. The other objection is, that this form of expression is unscriptural. It is not worth while for us to be more philosophical or accurate than the Bible. The word of God never tells the sinner he can do all that God requires of him, though it often presses on him his obligation. They know but little of the human heart, who so confidently maintain that a sense of obligation is incompatible with the deepest conviction of helplessness and inability.

The second view of this doctrine is the Arminian. It does not differ from the preceding except in one point. It admits that men have by the fall lost all ability of will to

that which is spiritually good, but it teaches that the common influences of the Spirit, given to all men who hear the gospel, imparts sufficient strength for the performance of all duty.

The third view is that which may, with propriety and therefore without offence, be called Pelagian. It is that which President Edwards attributes to Dr. Taylor of Norwich, viz. that there is "a sufficient power and ability in all mankind to do all their duty, and wholly avoid sin;" or, that "God has given powers equal to the duties which he expects." If this is so, says Edwards, "redemption is needless, and Christ is dead in vain."* This is the doctrine of the New Divinity. "What notion," asks the Christian Spectator, "can be formed of a subject of moral government, who is destitute of moral liberty? or, in other words, who, in every instance of obedience and disobedience, does not act with inherent power to the contrary choice."† "Choice, in its very nature," says Dr. Beecher, "implies the possibility of a different or contrary election to that which is made." Again, "The question is not whether man chooses, that is notorious, but whether his choice is free as opposed to a fatal necessity." (The reader will perceive that these two sentences contradict each other). "If a man does not possess the power of choice, with power to the contrary, he sees and feels he is not to blame."‡ The New Haven gentlemen constantly represent what has hitherto been represented as moral inability as inconsistent with free agency. Dr. Tyler had stated that there was in man "a native propensity to evil." His reviewer replies "With such a propensity, man has not a natural ability to avoid sin. And this is alike true, whether this propensity be supposed to be sinful or innocent." In like manner, because Dr. Tyler maintained that there was a moral change in the sinner anterior to right moral action, he is represented as teaching physical depravity, physical regeneration, natural inability, &c. &c.§ "Talk not," says the Spectator, "of the distinction of natural and moral ability, you have done it forever away. If the change in question consists in any thing prior to voluntary exercise, such a change I can in no sense produce."||

* Edwards' Works, Vol. 2, 515.

† Spectator 1835, p. 377.

‡ Views in Theology, p. 32. *et passim*.

§ Christian Spectator, 1832, Review of Dr. Tyler.

|| Spectator, 1833, p. 661. See a full discussion of the theory of free agency on which all these representations are founded, in our Number for July 1837.

It is therefore abundantly manifest that the New Divinity is, in its essential features, identical with the 'New Scheme of Religion' with which the pious people of Connecticut had to contend a century ago. If it was right for them to oppose it, it is right it should be opposed now. It was the friends of evangelical religion who resisted the introduction of the New Scheme; and it is the friends of religion who now oppose the New Divinity. The history of the church may be challenged to produce a single case in which true religion, we do not say has flourished, but has survived under the operation of that system of doctrine. It has been called Arminianism. But this is a great mistake. There is four-fold more truth and aliment for piety in Arminianism than in these new doctrines. Far more truth in the Arminian doctrine of original sin, of divine influence, of regeneration, of the atonement, of justification. And what has Arminianism to do with the doctrine that all virtue is founded in utility? (So too we suppose all beauty is founded in utility, and the only reason that a cascade gives pleasure is that it is adapted to turn a grist mill). And more especially, what has Arminianism to do with the monstrous doctrine that self-love is the ultimate foundation of moral obligation? The churches ought not to be deceived upon this subject. The New Divinity is not Arminianism, but something far, very far worse. Those men are to be pitied who can see nothing but a *shade* of difference between this system and the common orthodoxy of evangelical churches; and still more are they to be commiserated who, for party purposes, or for any other reason, call that a shade, which they know to be a bottomless abyss. It remains yet to be seen whether the faith and spirit of the Puritans have still sufficient vigour in New England effectually to withstand the progress of this system. It has received, we trust, its death blow in the Presbyterian church.

We resume our extracts from President Clap's Defence.

"The reading of this new scheme of religion will doubtless differently affect the minds of different readers: some will be filled with indignation, to see the great and fundamental doctrines of the gospel thus subverted and denied: others will think it scarce possible, that any men of sense should run into such absurd notions: others who have been inconsiderately led into some of the principles, will start, when they come to see how naturally they lead to some other of these principles, which at present they abhor. For this funda-

mental principle, 'that the happiness of the creature is the sole end of the creation,' naturally leads to most, if not all of the rest: for this must be the sole rule and measure of all God's conduct towards us, and of ours towards him; and it is certain, that God's sole end and ultimate design never can be frustrated. Others will be grieved and provoked, to see their whole scheme exposed to open view; since they find it most politic to conceal some parts of it, till they can get the minds of men pretty well rivetted into the rest.

"In order therefore, to bring men to an indifferency, and prepare them by degrees for the reception of this new scheme, sundry artifices have been used.

"That there ought to be no creeds or confessions of faith but the Bible: that there are no fundamental principles in religion, or any certain set of doctrines necessary to be believed, in order to salvation: that those which have been commonly esteemed such, are but mere disputable speculative points, which have no influence upon practice: and that the greatest heresy is an immoral life: that public orthodoxy has been very various in different countries; and in the same country at different times; that councils and assemblies of divines not being infallible, have no right to make or impose upon others, any creeds or confessions of faith, or public tests, or standards of orthodoxy; or to fix any particular sense or meaning on the Scripture: that no man is bound to believe as our fathers believed; but every man has a right to judge for himself; and that is truth to every man which he believes to be the truth: that every man shall be saved in that way or religion which he thinks is right, let it be what it will; provided he lives according to it: that it is sufficient, if men say, that they consent to the substance of our catechism and confession, without rigourously insisting upon every article and doctrine in it: that great condescension ought to be used, and sundry doctrines ought to be given up, either in whole or in part, or different explications allowed for the sake of unity.

"That no man ought to be so uncharitable, as to exclude another from salvation, or any public office of instruction, because he does not think as he does: that men's way of thinking is as different as their faces; and to endeavour to make all men think alike, is to make them bigots, and hinder all free enquiry after truth."

That is, the 'artifices' employed in President Clap's time to favour the introduction of error, were, 1. Undervaluing creeds and confessions, and subscribing them, for substance

of doctrine. 2. Making light of the points of difference, as mere philosophy, or matters of speculation, or modes of explanation. 3. Declaiming on the sin of destroying the unity of the church for the sake of doctrine; on the duty of charity towards errorists; on the right of free enquiry; and 4. Concealing the truth, as he says, p. 42: "Men of this character are not always open and frank in declaring their sentiments." Such it seems were the devices employed by the advocates of the New Scheme of religion a hundred years ago. Cannot the reader, without our aid, furnish modern illustrations in abundance under each of these heads? Our limits do not admit of our doing it for him, and the facts are so notorious, it can hardly be necessary. It is a standing topic of declamation, the folly of expecting men, who think for themselves, to join in adopting an extended creed. If the substance be adopted, that is all that can be required. And the substance is often a very small part of what is really characteristic of the formula. Is it not also a common method in our days of introducing the New Divinity, to make much of the distinction between the doctrines and the philosophy of them? to claim to hold the doctrines and differ only in the explanation, as even John Taylor professed to hold to original sin, with a new explanation? How much too have we heard of the sin of heresy hunting, of producing disturbance in the church, and of the duty of living in peace let men teach what they may? Who, however, is chargeable with the sin of controversy? the innovators, or those who defend the faith once delivered to the saints? Is there no sin in attacking brethren, who hold the faith of the very standards which the aggressors have adopted, and great sin in asserting what both parties have professed to believe? How true it is what the famous Mr. Foxcroft of Boston, remarked of his generation, "that false moderation, which sacrifices divine revelations to human friendships, and under colour of peace and candour gives up important points of gospel doctrine to every opposer, is still consistent with discovering a malignity towards others that appear warm defenders and constant asserters of those evangelical truths."*

The grand device, however, of errorist in every age, has been concealment. They do not come out boldly and frankly with their true sentiments, but endeavour to introduce

* Preface to President Dickinson's Second Vindication of God's Sovereign Grace. Boston, 1748.

them gradually as the public mind will bear them. The reader will probably remember that when the doctrine was first, in these days, broached that God could not prevent sin in a moral system, how delicately it was insinuated; it was merely said that the contrary could not be proved, or ought not to be assumed; the idea was thrown out as a hypothesis for further consideration. It may also be within the knowledge of the reader how virtuously indignant the Spectator was with Dr. Woods because he "changed Dr. Taylor's question into an assertion—his hypothetical statement into a positive affirmation."* Since that time, however, the doctrine has been asserted interrogatively and affirmatively; categorically and inferentially. It has been assumed as the basis of argument; the denial of it has been made the fountain of all manner of heresy and blasphemies. Notwithstanding all this, the simple hypothesis is still resorted to in times of peculiar emergency.

Another favourite method of concealment adopted in past ages was the introduction of new opinions under the patronage of revered names. This may remind the reader of the numerous attempts to make Edwards, Bellamy, Dwight, and others, teach the very doctrines which they strenuously opposed, in order to gain the sanction of their names for the errors which they endeavoured to refute. And, finally, as we must stop somewhere, another method of concealment is the use of ambiguous terms, or the introduction of errors under the old formulas of expression, employed in a new sense. Can any thing be more seemingly orthodox than the phrase 'total depravity by nature?' How little it seems to differ from natural depravity, or depravity of nature. Yet they are, as to the sense intended, the poles apart. God is said to foreordain whatsoever comes to pass. What Calvinist could desire more? Yet to foreordain turns out to mean, as it regards sin at least, to submit to its occurrence as an unavoidable evil, and to propose to do all in the power of Him who foreordains it, to prevent that occurrence. Original sin used to mean, in the language of President Edwards, "an innate sinful depravity of heart." The term is still retained by those who teach with the New Haven Spectator, Mr. Duffield, and others, that infants have no moral character. Prof. Fitch says "Nothing can in truth be called original sin, but his first moral choice or preference being evil." Mr.

* Spectator, 1830, p. 541.

Duffield says, indeed, "original sin is a natural bias to evil."* Here to the uninitiated it would appear that two things are asserted, first that this bias to evil is sin; and second, that it is natural. But no such thing. This same Mr. Duffield says, "Instinct, animal sensation, constitutional susceptibilities create an impulse, which, not being counteracted by moral considerations or gracious influence, lead the will in a wrong direction and to wrong objects. It was thus that sin was induced in our holy progenitors. No one can plead in Eve an efficient cause of sin resident in her nature (any *prava vis*) or operative power, sinful in itself, anterior to and apart from her own voluntary act. And if she was led into sin, though characteristically holy, and destitute of any innate propensity to sin, where is the necessity for supposing that the sins of her progeny are to be referred to such a cause?" . . . "Temptation alone is sufficient under present circumstances."† Thus after all it appears that this "natural bias to evil" is nothing more than the constitutional susceptibilities of our nature, such as it existed before the fall, yet this bias is said to be SIN. Rather than not be orthodox and hold to original sin, he makes it exist in our "holy progenitors" before the first transgression! Can this be exceeded in the whole history of theological diplomacy? Yet it is a fair interpretation of the language of the Protest, as explained by the writings of some of its authors.

We wish it were in our power to insert the whole of President Clap's pamphlet; but we have already much exceeded the limits assigned for this article. We must therefore conclude with a few citations given without remark.

"The doctrines contained in our Catechism and Confession of Faith, particularly the divinity and satisfaction of Christ, original sin, the necessity of special grace in regeneration, justification by faith, &c. have been universally received, established and taught in all ages of the Christian church: and upon all the search I have been able to make into antiquity, I can find no single instance of any public Confession of Faith, drawn up by any council, or generally received and establish-

* Minutes for the General Assembly for 1837. Protest by George Duffield, E. W. Gilbert and others against the adoption of the report on so much of the memorial of the Convention as relates to erroneous doctrines. The statement of doctrines contained in that Protest, as explained by the writings of its leading signers, is the most extraordinary example of the use of old terms in a sense directly opposite to their ordinary meaning, which we have ever seen.

† Duffield on Regeneration p. 379, 380

ed in any Christian country in the world, wherein any of these doctrines have been plainly and expressly denied.

“For though there have been some men scattered up and down in the world, and sometimes convened in assemblies, who have not believed these doctrines, and have sometimes endeavoured covertly to disguise them, and let them drop, and, by degrees, to root them out of the Christian church; yet they never dared openly and formally to deny them, by any public act; because they knew that these doctrines had been so universally received in the Christian church, that all antiquity would condemn them, and that such an open denial would bring upon them the resentment of all mankind.”

On page thirty-seven we find the following passage, “Some will say, that they own the doctrine of original sin; but they mean nothing but a contracted disposition or inclination, arising from a vicious habit, or practice, and deny that any disposition or inclination to sin, is naturally derived from Adam: and assert, that every child comes into the world like a clean white piece of paper.

“Mr. Taylor calls the doctrine of original sin, a scripture doctrine; and yet when he comes to explain it, with regard to Adam’s posterity, he makes it no sin at all; and allows nothing but that, upon the sin of Adam, God subjected him and his posterity to temporal sorrow, labour and death.* And these are not punishments for sin, but primarily designed for the benefit of mankind, considered as innocent creatures. For, he says that upon the occasion of Adam’s sin, God appointed our life frail, laborious and sorrowful, and at length to be concluded by death, not to punish us for another man’s sin, but to lessen temptation.†

“And therefore, I cannot think that public orthodoxy in teachers, can be sufficiently secured barely by men’s saying, that they consent to the substance of our catechism and confession of faith, and differ only in some small circumstantial, leaving it to them to judge what those small circumstantial are: for a man may suppose or pretend, that the ten commandments are the most substantial part of the catechism, and that the doctrines of the divinity and satisfaction of Christ, original sin, &c. are but mere speculative circumstantial points, upon which no great weight ought to be laid. Such persons ought at least to declare, what particular articles

* “Page 63.”

† “Page 68.”

they do except, that so others may judge whether they are mere circumstantials or not.

“But then it is difficult, if not dangerous, to give up any one proper doctrine or article of faith, contained in our confession: for all the articles of faith in a system or body of divinity, have a necessary relation to, and connection with each other; whoever therefore gives up any one article of faith, must, if he is consistent with himself, give up another which has a necessary connection with it, or dependence upon it; and so on, till he gives up the whole. Indeed, some men seem to be partly in one scheme of religion, and partly in another; but such men are always inconsistent with themselves; although for want of accurately tracing their own ideas, they are not always sensible of it.

“Some men will pretend to consent to an article of faith, and yet believe nothing of it, in the true grammatical construction of the words, and the meaning of the composers. e. g. Some who pretend to consent to the thirty-nine articles; by original sin, and the corruption of humane nature, mean nothing but bodily weakness and sickness; and by its deserving God's wrath and damnation, mean nothing but bodily sickness and pain, and the temporal miseries of this life.

“So the meaning of that article, according to them, is, that Adam's sin is the occasion of our undergoing bodily sickness and weakness, which deserves bodily sickness and pain.

“Condescension, charity and unity, are very excellent things, when applied to promote the ends of the gospel; and therefore, it is a pity they should upon any occasion be perverted to destroy it.

“But condescension has no more to do with articles of faith, than with propositions in the mathematics. And though a man ought in many cases to give up his own right or interest; yet he cannot in any case give up the truth of God, revealed in his word.

“Charity is but another name for love, and the consequent effects of it, in believing or hoping the best concerning any man, which the nature of the case will allow; and considering how apt corrupt nature is to intermix self-interest, passion and prejudice, with matters of religion, it is a virtue which, in that view, ought to be much insisted upon: but charity no more consists in inventing or believing new terms of salvation, unknown to the gospel, than it does in believing a sick man will recover, when the symptoms of death are evidently upon him. Such charity as that, is the greatest

uncharitableness, as it tends to lull men in security to their eternal destruction.

“Unity in a joint-declared consent to the great and fundamental principles of religion, and practice of the duties of it, is a matter of great importance; but without such a consent, unity is founded upon nothing; and can never answer any of the great ends proposed in the gospel. Men must be agreed at least in the object of their worship, whether it be the eternal self-existent God, or a mere creature: and in order to maintain this unity in the Christian church, there always have been public creeds and confessions of faith, (all agreeing in substance) to which all, especially the teachers, have given their joint consent.

“Neither can those who adhere to the ancient doctrines of the Christian church, be properly called a party: that odious name properly belongs to each of those particular sects, which, from time to time, oppose those doctrines and thereby make themselves a party.

“The Bible is indeed the only foundation of our Christian faith; and all the question is, in what sense we are to understand it: but so far as any regard is to be had to the judgment of great and good men, in expounding of it, (and I think it is an argument of great self-sufficiency, if not self-conceit, to have none at all,) yet the number and quality of those who have at any time opposed these doctrines, bear no comparison to the vast number of martyrs, and other eminently wise and good men, who have constantly maintained them. And the opinion of Arius, Pelagius, Socinus, Arminius, Foster, Chubb, Taylor, and all their followers, are but as the small dust of the balance, when put into the scale against the opinion of the whole Christian church in all ages.

“But I am free, that every man should examine for himself, and then openly declare what he finds.

“For my part, I have critically and carefully, and, I think, with the utmost impartiality, examined into the doctrines contained in our catechism and confession of faith, and believe they are fully and plainly contained in the sacred oracles of truth, perfectly agreeable to reason, and harmonious with each other; and that most of them are of the utmost consequence to the salvation of the souls of men. And therefore look upon myself in duty bound, to do all that lies in my power, to continue and propagate those doctrines; especially in the college committed to my care, since that is the fountain from whence our churches must be supplied.

“ And I hope, that all the ministers of this colony, according to the recommendation of former synods, and later general associations, will be careful and zealous to maintain and propagate the same in all our churches: that they will clearly and plainly preach all the doctrines contained in the sacred oracles of truth, and especially the more important of them, summed up in our catechism and confession of faith; that they will not endeavour to conceal or disguise any of these doctrines, nor shun to declare the whole counsel of God. That they will be careful not to introduce into the sacred ministry, any but such as appear to be well-fixed in these principles upon which our churches are established. It is a pleasure to me, to observe, that no person who has lately been licensed to preach as a candidate, lies under any suspicion of that nature.”

Samuel Miller

ART. IV.—*Sermons by the late Rev. Edward D. Griffin, D.D. To which is prefaced a Memoir of his life.* By William B. Sprague, D.D. Minister of the second Presbyterian Congregation in Albany. 2 Vols. 8vo. pp. 597, and 596. Albany: Packard & Van Benthuysen & Co. 1838.

THIS publication has been for some time looked for by the religious community with no small interest. It was known, early in the last year, that the Rev. Dr. Sprague had been selected by the family and friends of the late Dr. Griffin to prepare a memoir of his life, and to arrange and publish a portion of those Discourses which, from the lips of their venerable author, had so often made a solemn impression. The choice was a happy one. Dr. Sprague was well acquainted with the subject of his biographical sketch, and well qualified to do justice to his undertaking: and he has accomplished his task in a manner which we think will not disappoint the expectations of the public. The Rev. Edward Dorr Griffin, was a native of the state of Connecticut. He was born at East Haddam, January 6, 1770. His father, George Griffin was a wealthy farmer, of vigorous talents, and of much enterprise. His mother was Eve Dorr of Lyme. He was named after his fraternal uncle, the Rev. Edward Dorr, of Hartford; and in the intention of his parents, was devoted to the minis-