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No. I.

ART. I.—*Survey of modern German Works on Interpretation.*

FOR reasons which have been too often stated in this miscellany to need a repetition now, we think it important that the American student should have some acquaintance with the German works which relate to the study of the Scriptures. We do not, indeed, wish to see a criticism which puts all the foundations out of course introduced into our church; we dare not rejoice in the scepticism which already creeps into some minds with regard to the canonical integrity, the authenticity, and the inspiration of the Bible. But we are persuaded, that if the church consents to close her eyes upon the increasing facilities for biblical investigation which are possessed in Germany, and to turn away from the controversies which are there waged, she will find herself in a field of battle without armour, or, if armed, with the mail and greaves and heavy weapons of a former age, wholly unsuited to the emergency, and the new modes of attack.

With these impressions, we are about to lay before our readers a succinct review of recent German publications, in the biblical department. As our object is to give information, we shall borrow from every source which is accessible to us. The works

ment fault which they have, as printed discourses, is, that they are too copious, and the style too diffuse. For delivery *viva voce* they are excellently adapted; but discourses to be read should be in a style more concise; and where the same train of thought occurs a second time, many things very proper to be repeated in the delivery, might be advantageously rescinded. We are induced to enforce this suggestion by another consideration, which is, that if these Lectures were somewhat abridged, they would then form a volume of suitable size to be used as a manual in literary institutions. We hope that when they appear again, they will assume the form of a neat duodecimo instead of a ponderous octavo; and if our judgment is not incorrect, their usefulness will be more than double.

The twelfth Lecture contains a summary of the evidence before adduced; and the thirteenth is *on the inspiration of the Scriptures*, with concluding observations. The subject of this last Lecture is exceedingly important, but there was not space allowed for a thorough discussion of a subject, which is environed with not a few difficulties. Upon the whole, we would recommend that the subject of this Lecture be reserved for another work, and that *the internal evidences* be also considered, which, as in the case of Bishop Wilson's work on the Evidences, would form a second volume.

ART. VII.—*Suggestions to Theological Students, on some of those traits of Character, which the spirit of the age renders peculiarly important in the Ministers of the Gospel.*

THE question which the Apostle Peter proposes, in view of the second advent of the Son of God, is one which Christians, and Christian ministers especially, should often ponder, *What manner of men ought ye to be?* There is, obviously, much which the candidate for the ministry needs, which is equally necessary for every believer. Yet, as every man's duty is more or less modified by the peculiarity of his circumstances, it is evident, that there are some traits of character which are especially important, to those who are to be ensamples and leaders of the flock of Jesus Christ. Of these traits, and of those especially which the peculiarity of our circumstances renders important for us, we should form a definite conception; and, having clearly apprehended their nature, steadily labour for their attainment. It is, indeed, much to be feared, that few men adequately feel the necessity of striving to form their characters aright. They neither

fix in their minds distinctly what they ought to be, nor endeavour systematically to bring themselves up to the standard. They leave this great concern very much to itself, allowing the circumstances in which they are placed, and the truths which, in the providence of God, are brought to bear upon them, to mould their principles and feelings, without any settled plan or purpose. The result of this course is imperfection and inconstancy. Many faults are left unnoticed, to gain the ascendancy, and many tendencies of their situation are unapprehended, and consequently unresisted. It is necessary here, as elsewhere, to act intelligently and rigorously; to feel that we are not passive matter, to be fashioned by ab extra influences of men and things, but active beings, who must, in dependence on the grace of God, endeavour to make ourselves what God and duty require. We may be allowed, therefore, to call the attention of that class of our readers, for whom these remarks are designed, to a few of those traits of character which, under existing circumstances, it is peculiarly important for them to cultivate.

I. A sacred regard for the truth of God.

There is an important practical difference between the position occupied by the Christian minister, and the speculative philosopher, whether moralist or theologian. The one is to receive on authority what God has revealed, the other to discover for himself what is truth. The grounds of assault are different. The one believes because God has spoken, the other because he discovers, or fancies that he does, the coincidences between his opinions, and established or intuitive truths. The Christian theologian, indeed, is not required to believe any thing which shocks his reason, or does violence to the constitution of his nature; but, the ground of his faith is essentially the divine testimony, though he may perceive by the aid of the Spirit, the harmony of the truths which he is called upon to receive, and their coincidence with all other principles which he knows to be correct. The state of mind which this difference of position produces, is very diverse; and, consequently, the theologian, who addresses himself to the study of theology, as the philosopher to the investigation of truth, has placed himself in a false position; his state of mind will necessarily be wrong, and his results, in all probability, erroneous and unstable, destitute of their proper authority for himself or others. Though the correctness of these remarks may be admitted, yet it is nevertheless the fact, that few things are more common than this initial error among students of theology. They place themselves in a wrong posture. They mistake as to the nature of their work. They commence by settling the principles of moral or mental philosophy, and thence evolve their system of

theology; first determine what must be truth, and then, for courtesy sake, turn to the Bible to see what *is* truth. This course is utterly inconsistent with proper reverence for a divine revelation. It is a practical denial of its necessity; an assertion of an ability to do without it. As this has ever been one of the most prevalent evils of the Church, and to no small degree is characteristic of our own age and country, we should sedulously watch against it, remembering that one important part of the obedience we owe to God, is submission to the truth as he has revealed it. As this dependence upon ourselves implies a want of sufficient reverence for the Scripture, as a communication from God, so it tends to produce indifference to the truth. When a large part of a man's theology is made up of the speculations and deductions of his own mind, he is apt to think that the points of difference between himself and others are mere matters of philosophical distinction. Conscious that much of what he holds to be religious truth, he so regards on his own authority, he naturally supposes the same is the case with others, and, of course, regards the difference as of little consequence. The authority of God is, in his view, not concerned, but only human reasoning. It would be strange, therefore, if he felt any very special concern on the subject. He may, indeed, be sufficiently strenuous and positive, but the offence of those who differ from him, is more an offence against reason and common sense, than God. Indifference to truth, and to serious diversity of religious opinion, is, therefore, the natural consequence of this spirit. We accordingly find this result always prevalent, in proportion to the ascendancy of this spirit. In some countries, at the present day, theology is professedly regarded as a mere department of philosophy; and the appearance of a new system of religious doctrine, is no more regarded than the announcement of a new theory of physics. No one dreams that an opinion can be a crime, or the evidence of it, even though the opinion should involve the denial of the divine being, or of the existence of sin. Such extreme cases are instructive, as they show the consequence of making theology a branch of philosophy. And this is often practically done, by those who professedly acknowledge and imagine, that they feel the supremacy of the Scriptures. It is not necessary to look beyond the sea, to find abundant illustrations of the truth of this remark. We have examples on every hand, and, doubtless, furnish them not unfrequently ourselves. For nothing is more difficult to avoid, than this sinful neglect and indifference to the testimony of God, arising from an overweening confidence in the correctness of our own reasonings. The way to avoid the effect, is to guard against the cause. To learn practically to regard the word of God as

his word, worthy of implicit reliance, and unhesitating acceptance.

Another cause of this indifference to divine truth, is a false spirit of liberality. This is as insidious, and, perhaps, more so than the other. It comes in the guise of virtue. Liberality, in its genuine exercise, is one of the last attainments of an enlarged and sanctified mind. It presupposes so extended and accurate a knowledge of divine truth, that the distinction between essential and unessential points is easily perceived, and feelings so regulated, that all are affectionately and cordially regarded, who agree as to important points. While, therefore, the truly liberal man is firm and strenuous in maintaining truth, he is no bigot. For bigotry implies the undue regard of trivial matters; a contending for them with a zeal, justifiable only when vital truths are concerned. As liberality implies so much excellence, and is so generally attractive and popular, it is not wonderful that we should all desire the reputation of possessing it; and this reputation is very easily gained. Indifference to the truth will commonly answer the purpose; and where obloquy is the portion of those who are not thus indifferent, the temptation is very strong to avoid this evil, by unpardonable concessions. While spurious liberality is thus the offspring, at times, of indifference, at others it is an amiable weakness, or, rather, a weakness of amiable characters. Men whose love of peace and kind feelings predominates over other parts of their character, and cause them to sanction opinions which they entirely disapprove of. Whatever may be the source of this spirit, it obviously leads to a disregard of the truth of God. We see men under its influence, seemingly indifferent to important departures from the faith of the Gospel, and unwilling even to avow distinctly their opinions, lest they should be committed, or appear as too strenuous advocates of a particular system. It is plain, that the evils of such a disposition must be extensive, if from no other reason, at least from the fact that the plea and appeal to liberality are always most frequent among those whose departures from the truth are the most serious. The deity of Christ; the doctrine of the atonement; of regeneration, and of the eternal punishment of the finally impenitent, are rejected by men whose claims to liberality are the loudest, and whose appeals to it are the most constant. Those who are surrounded by such men, and still appreciate and maintain the truth and importance of these doctrines, must expect to be regarded as bigots. The case here, it will be seen, is plain. Every one acknowledges, that a liberality which can render a man indifferent to such points, is inexcusable and destructive. But the difficulty with most minds is, to know where to draw the line; what errors

may be tolerated, and what strenuously opposed. It commends itself, probably, at first view, to Christian feelings to say, that only such opinions as are inconsistent with piety should be matters of dispute; that so long as enough of the Gospel is retained to be a foundation for a good hope and a good life, we must give ourselves no concern. And, indeed, nothing can be plainer, than that duty requires us to recognise men and things as they really are; and hence, if a man be a Christian, we should regard and treat him as such, however much we may differ from him as to points of doctrine. But, to say nothing of the difficulty of deciding what opinions are, and what are not inconsistent with real religion, this rule, though applicable to the terms of communion among Christians generally, is evidently out of place, when applied to the members, or especially the ministers of the same denomination. The judgment which we form of a man or minister, who is a member of a church professedly Arminian, and who avows the doctrines of his denomination, is very different from what we should entertain toward a member of a Calvinistic society, who should avow the same sentiments. And a mode of treatment highly illiberal towards the one, might be a matter of duty towards the other. Because it is right to regard a Christian as a Christian, it surely does not follow that we must regard an Arminian as a Calvinist. This distinction between what is due to a man as a follower of Christ, and what is due to him as a member of any particular denomination, professing a particular form of doctrine, though so perfectly obvious, is frequently disregarded. How often is the declaration heard from Presbyterians, "If a man is only a Christian, and is active in doing good, we care not what doctrines he teaches." This is meant to be an avowal of a high minded liberality; but a moment's reflection shows that it is an acknowledgment of the utmost inconsistency, and a disregard of solemn obligations. It is a declaration that every portion of truth, not absolutely essential to salvation, is of little consequence; and that it matters not whether a man who professes to be a Calvinist, is one or not. While we readily grant, that it is a duty and privilege to love and cherish all who bear the impress of the Saviour's image, and that we should reject no man from our fellowship whom Christ would receive to his, it is equally plain that no obligation can be more obvious than that which requires men who make a profession of a particular form of doctrine, to be sincere; and those who promise to uphold that form, because they believe it true, to be faithful to their engagement. It is professing, therefore, a freedom from the restraints of morality, to be so liberal as to be indifferent to truth, which we have professed to hold, and engaged to defend. There are, evidently,

therefore, two rules which bind every minister and member of a church; the one which fixes the line of his duty towards Christians, as such, the other towards those who are members of his own Society. A man may be a very good Christian, and as such entitled to Christian fellowship, and yet, hold opinions inconsistent with his being an Episcopalian, a Methodist, or a Presbyterian. A neglect of this obvious distinction has led, we doubt not, to much criminal remissness, with regard to the truth as held by our Church.

Another and more serious cause of this indifference to truth, is a want of experience of its power and value. No man can lightly esteem that which he knows from his own experience to have a powerful influence in the sanctification or consolation of believers. No man who has not felt the truth of the divine declarations of the evil of sin, nor experienced the power and sovereignty of divine grace, nor rejoiced in the peace which follows the acceptance of Christ, as the propitiation for our sins, can be expected to feel the value or importance of these doctrines. He will regard those who make them essential to the salvation of men, as narrow minded, and will spurn the idea of censuring those who reject them. It will be found, the world over, that truths which men have thus deeply felt, they will cling to and defend, and, therefore, the more thoroughly men are imbued with the spirit of the word of God, the more they feel the value of its various doctrines, the more consistent and firm will they be in maintaining and promoting them.

While it is evidently our duty to guard against indifference to the truth, from whatever cause it may arise, we should be very careful not to offend on the opposite extreme, by magnifying mole hills into mountains; with indiscriminating zeal, contending with equal warmth for the most trivial technicality, and the most essential doctrine. It is plain, that the duty of a Christian minister, in reference to this point, is exceedingly difficult. He may, on the one hand, not only offend God, but ruin souls, by his unconcern as to doctrinal opinions, or, on the other, disgrace and retard religion by unnecessary alarms and clamours. Hence the necessity for every such man carefully and thoroughly to study the word of God; that he may learn to his own satisfaction what God has taught. Let him form his opinions on mature deliberation; and let him fix the principles which should govern him in their defence and propagation, and then let him calmly, humbly, and firmly pursue his course, through evil and through good report, disregarding the accusation of bigotry from the one side, or latitudinarianism on the other.

If a man properly appreciate his relation to God, the supre-

macy which he claims over our minds and consciences, as well as our lives, the infinite distance there is between him and us, he will feel the folly and guilt of disregarding what he has revealed. He will feel that he is not to postpone the Bible to his own reasonings; by practically forming his opinions in doctrinal matters in a great measure independently of the word of God. Let him remember that truth is essential to holiness and salvation; that it has always been repulsive to the majority of men; and, therefore, difficult to maintain and uphold; that the responsibility of thus maintaining and transmitting it, rests mainly with the ministry; and that the fate of many generations may depend on their fidelity. Look at the melancholy desolations of the ancient world. Think you that piety would be so prostrated, had the priest's lips kept knowledge? Would the Protestant part of France have exhibited so few signs of life for more than a century? Would her clergy have been ready to close their temples, and join in the worship of reason, at the command of a mad directory? Would Germany, with all her stores of learning, and depth of feeling, be now leagued with every antichrist in opposition to the cause of the Redeemer? When we properly appreciate the necessity of truth to piety, the dreadful and long-continued consequences of its neglect, we shall feel that to be indifferent to its interests is one of the greatest sins of which a minister can be guilty; give heed, therefore, to your doctrines; hold fast the form of sound words; contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. Bear in mind, not only the precepts, but also the example of the apostle Paul. His life was a protracted conflict with false teachers, his epistles are, almost without exception, in defence of truth, and opposition to errors of doctrine and practice. Follow his example, however, not only as to zeal, but, like him, let it be evident to your own consciences, and to all men, that your zeal is not for a party, but for the truth; not for victory over men, but for the purity of the Gospel, that men may be saved. Like him, too, do not contend about trifles; become all things to all men, within the limits of truth and honesty; but do not let the cry of bigotry, or fear of reproach drive you from your principles. Depend upon it, you have a difficult part to act. And you cannot act it well without much knowledge, much prayer, and much piety. The spirit of the age, however, admonishes every man who notices its tendency, that fidelity to the truth is one of the most important requisites for the ministry of the present generation.

II. A second requisite of no less importance is *a sacred regard for all moral obligations*. It is a lamentable fact, though one so obvious as to be frequently the subject of remark, that

pious men are often less honest, less moral, than many who make no pretensions to religion. That is, they have less regard to truth, are less punctual in their engagements, and less faithful in the discharge of their relative duties. We are not to be understood as guilty of the extravagance of saying that such is generally the case; but that instances often occur of really pious men, who are obviously inferior, in all these respects, to many men of the world. It need hardly be remarked, that this is a great disgrace to religion, and the greater when these instances are to be found among ministers of the Gospel. The causes of this lamentable defect of character are numerous. It has its origin at times in the natural constitution. There really seems to be as great a difference among men as to native susceptibility to moral truth, as in their talents, tastes, dispositions, or temperaments. The sentiment which men, thus constitutionally deficient in moral feeling, excite, is not that of pity, but of disapprobation. We cannot help regarding them, not as unfortunate, but the subject of a moral defect, and therefore, never suffer nor sustain the plea that they are naturally dishonest. Such persons, even when made the subjects of divine grace, often betray this want of moral sensibility, just as the man, who is not usually irascible, or improvident, or frivolous, is apt to retain traces of his original temperament. In every such case, there is need of double watchfulness; and the necessity for circumspection is greater in proportion to the seriousness of the besetting infirmity or constitutional defect. More frequently, however, the evil of which we speak arises from habit, and the want of moral discipline. Early in life the habit is often formed of departing from the path of rectitude as it regards truth, or fidelity, or punctuality. And this habit long cherished, is not always laid aside at conversion. Of course the departures, if the conversion be genuine, cannot be so glaring as before, but they are in many cases both sufficiently frequent and serious to bring great discredit on religion. Another source of the same evil is to be found in the general want of self-command. When a present gratification can be attained by a violation of strict integrity not sufficiently serious to shock the conscience, or endanger the reputation, the temptation is yielded to without hesitation. How often does a man, for the sake of giving point to an anecdote, or pungency to a remark, or to ward off an attack in argument, knowingly exaggerate or prevaricate. How often too, from indolence, are acknowledged duties, engagements, or promises neglected. How often, for vanity's sake, or self-gratification in some other form, are debts contracted without the reasonable prospect of discharging them. Every man is liable, in some such a way, to be led into a violation of the duties,

which he owes his fellow-men, and it therefore cannot be unseasonable to call the attention of those, whose conduct is so narrowly watched, and whose deportment is naturally expected to be exemplary, to this subject. Many men greatly injure their moral feelings by the nature of their studies, and the character of some of their speculative opinions. There can be no reasonable doubt that pushing our investigations on moral and religious subjects beyond the proper limits of human research, has an unhappy influence on the moral susceptibilities of our nature. As the exclusive study of the exact sciences is found to incapacitate the mind to appreciate moral evidence, and to destroy the susceptibility for the pleasures of taste, so, too, does it often happen, that metaphysical analysis and refinement, when too exclusively indulged, or too far extended, destroy the nice perception of right and wrong. This perception or judgment is guided by the emotion which instinctively rises on the view of the proper objects; but they must be viewed as a whole, the attempt at analysis destroys their power over the feelings, at least for the time. Hence we see professional metaphysicians often maintaining doctrines in morals, which every unsophisticated man knows to be false; and hence, too, such men are frequently withered and dry as a body which has lost its sensibility and vitality; they have no moral pleasures, no moral emotions, the greatest exhibition of excellence does not move them, and the greatest depravity hardly produces disgust.

The same perverting effect is often produced by disputing for disputing's sake, maintaining error for the sake of argument, or starting sentiments which are not really entertained. The moral sense is too delicate to be thus trifled with. The man who often lies in jest, will soon lie in earnest. The remark that speculative opinions are of frequent injurious tendency on the character of those who adopt them, hardly needs illustration. The effects of fatalism, of atheism, of materialism, of pantheism, are so evidently destructive to moral feeling, that none but their advocates can question it. The same is true, in a proportionate degree, with regard to opinions less extravagantly wrong. The Jesuits furnish a standing illustration of the truth in question. Their very name is now the expression, not only for adroit duplicity, but for perverted moral principle. This character was not feigned; supposing them to have acted as though they had no principle, they must really have had none. Their conduct cannot be explained on the principle of passive obedience merely. It would be impossible to take a man of healthful moral feelings, and get him to act the part of a Jesuit, at once, even though he thought his salvation at stake. A long course of demoralization

was necessary to fit men for the work, and this preparatory discipline, consisted mainly in the inculcation of false doctrines. It was through their influence the moral sense was withered up. It should, therefore, never be forgotten, that as all truth is in order to holiness, and tends to produce it, so, all error is baneful in its influence on those who espouse it. It is only the grosser forms of error, which are sufficiently striking in their effects to be perceptible to our dull vision; but to the eye of God, the hurtful influence of all false principles and doctrines is apparent. And hence he warns men from error, as he warns them from sin.

The only other source of a perverted moral sense, and want of moral rectitude among pious men, which need be mentioned, is a spirit of party. It is wonderful that the mere congregating of men in large numbers should have the effect which we often observe. A man, though peaceable and harmless when by himself, if introduced into an excited crowd, is no longer the same person. He seems to lose his individuality, and to become but a constituent member of a great monster. He is no longer governed by his own individual principles, or feelings, but catching the spirit of the throng, he acts under its guidance, without reflection or remorse. There is more or less of this observable, whenever men are brought to act in large numbers, even in deliberative bodies. The individual is more or less lost, and the spirit of the whole, or of the party, becomes the spirit of each member. Hence men are frequently guilty of acts of moral turpitude, as members of such bodies, from which, as individuals, they would have revolted. It is, indeed, a common saying, "that corporations have no consciences." The reason of this is not to be sought in divided responsibility merely; for in fact, the moral responsibility is not divided. He that votes that injustice should be done, is not the less guilty, because ten or a hundred others do the same. The cause is frequently to be found in the deadening influence on the moral sense of the spirit by which such bodies are often pervaded. The spirit of party, when it once has gained possession of a man, is not confined in its influence to these casual exacerbations; it governs, in a great measure, the whole course of the individual in reference to all subjects which his party have in view. He becomes habituated to view things, not as right or wrong, but in their party bearings. He often feels that he must either do wrong, and sin against his private judgment, or abandon the cause. As he is but one of a multitude, and if they will go wrong, he cannot hinder them; he commonly, therefore, unscrupulously advances, gathering strength as he goes, until he arrives at a state of complete demoralization, acting,

all but avowedly, on the principle that the end sanctions the means. Respectable and honourable men, who have run the course of politics, have often been heard to hoot at the idea of there being any morality or conscience in politicians as such; and instances are not unfrequent where editors of newspapers, professedly pious men, and sufficiently exemplary in other respects to avoid reproach, knowingly publish the most malicious falsehoods to injure a political opponent. Now, brethren, is this fell spirit confined to the world? does it fear to mingle with the sons of God, in their holy convocations? does it dread to pass the threshold of the Church? Would that this were the case; but it is not. It has ever existed in every large community, where there was diversity of views and interests, and its baneful influence has not been less apparent in the Church than elsewhere. Here, alas, we see men, and even good men, carried along by its power; asking, with regard to every measure, not whether it is right, but how it will operate, for, or against their own party. We see them too, resorting to all the expedients of political men for the accomplishment of their objects; plotting, manœuvring, perverting truth and facts; and doing all this as though they were doing God service. Such is the perverting influence of the spirit of party; blinding the moral perceptions, and deadening the moral sensibilities of the heart. Against this spirit you should be ever on your guard. It is infectious and insidious in the highest degree. It enters at every pore by some mysterious sympathy; and when the demon is in, we are as men possessed. There is but one way of preventing this, let the soul always be so full of the Holy Ghost, that it shall always be pre-occupied; and let the determination be graven on both tablets of the heart, always to do what is right in the sight of God, not what is politic, nor what a party wishes.

It is enough to make one weep to think that from one or the other of the causes mentioned, or from others of similar tendency, there is so general a perversion of moral feeling, such a weakening of the principles of moral rectitude, that it is now high, if not the highest praise, to say that a Christian man or minister is *honest*; that is, that he acts from moral principle, not from policy and party feeling; that he always means what he says; that there is no prevarication, double dealing, or chicanery about him; that, in debate or controversy, he never misstates facts, or misrepresents arguments, but uniformly in speech and conduct is frank, ingenuous, above-board, and sincere.

There are obviously few subjects in the present state of the Church and the world, of greater practical importance than that

to which we have ventured in these remarks to call your attention. Do endeavour to be honest men, men of unquestionable integrity, on whose word every one can implicitly rely, of whose purity of motive and purpose no one can doubt. Impress deeply upon your mind that morality is a great part of religion, a great and essential part of the service which we owe to God. Habituate yourselves always to look at the moral character of every thing you are called upon to do. Determine always to do what is right, regardless of consequences. Never trifle with your moral feelings; it is trifling with God. Never suffer yourselves to do wrong in little matters; to neglect little duties; but be punctual and faithful in all engagements, and obligations. You are now forming your characters and fixing your principles, and if you accustom yourselves now to the disregard of duties, and violation of engagements in matters which may appear of little importance, you are educating yourselves for more serious departures from rectitude in future life. Such matters cannot be considered little, for, if not in themselves, yet in their influence on character, they are greatly and permanently important.

The influence of Chatham, in the British senate, is said to have resulted not more from his commanding intellect and eloquence, than from his honesty. His audience could not resist the impression that he was sincere and pure in his principles and aims; and there is enough of power yet in stern integrity, and enough of moral feeling in every human heart, to give the honest man a real, though a reluctantly yielded ascendancy, over the hearts of those around him. In nothing are the honour of religion, and the usefulness of ministers more involved.

III. Another characteristic which should distinguish ministers of the present age, is *activity in doing good*. This it is the tendency of the spirit of the times to produce, and, therefore, though feeling and acknowledging its importance, we shall not dwell on the subject, having considered it more useful to call the attention of our younger brethren to subjects to which the spirit of the age is rather hostile than friendly.

The demand for activity is now such, that a minister cannot get along without it; and this, so far, is a great blessing. The Bible speaks of nothing with greater disapprobation than sloth, even where the things of this world are in view, and for a man who professes to have it as his object to win souls, to be a sluggard, must be peculiarly offensive in the sight of God. Only be careful that your activity does not arise from the mere desire of being busy, or of avoiding the irksomeness of retired study, or from the love of excitement, or for the reputation which attends it, but from deep impressions of the guilt and misery of uncon-

verted men, and a proper sense of your obligations to Jesus Christ.

IV. The age in which we live calls for *unusual mental discipline and furniture*. The necessity of an enlightened and well educated ministry arises, indeed, from the essential nature of the work which ministers have to perform; and, therefore, always exists. But at the present time it is peculiarly important, because the tendency of circumstances is to break down this hedge around the sacred office, and to let in a flood of uneducated, undisciplined men. The demand is so much greater than the supply, that the temptation is strong to hasten the entrance on active duty, of all who are looking forward to the work, and this temptation, addressing itself to excited feelings, has more than wonted force. It is precisely, however, in such a state of things that an ignorant ministry is to be most dreaded. There are men who will be prepared to substitute fanaticism for spiritual piety; to overturn all the landmarks of truth and order, and to turn the Church over with a fierce fanatical spirit, and thus reduce it to lasting barrenness. When the religious opinions and character of large and growing communities are to be formed; when new forms of doctrine are broached on every hand, and when a spirit of excitement and action is abroad in the land, then, if ever, should ministers be thoroughly instructed, wise, well disciplined, and faithful. Let it then be impressed on your minds, brethren, that the circumstances of the Church and country, render it peculiarly important for you to be thoroughly furnished for your work; that you can hardly do a greater injury to the cause of religion, than by plunging into the agitated and conflicting elements around you, unprepared by well digested knowledge, and well considered principles. This state of things, while it renders ignorance dangerous, furnishes to the properly qualified minister, the prospect of doing good for ages to come, of laying the foundations for many generations.

V. Our limits will hardly permit us to mention what ought to have been the chief topic of discourse, were it not the one which is most frequently inculcated, and that is, *a spirit of elevated piety*, as a requisite for the ministry, which the circumstances of the times render peculiarly important. When things are all in regular training, when the battle in a country is well nigh fought, and the land possessed and secured, we may feel less sensibly the value of eminent spirituality in the preachers of the Gospel. But, when almost every thing is to be done; when those who enter in the ministry, if not animated by a right spirit, are sure to be filled and excited by an evil one; when temptations, dangers, and difficulties are multiplied on every hand; when men need so much

teaching and so much guidance, which can only come from the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, then it is we look around for those who are deeply and sincerely pious; who live near to God and the cross, as the hope and stay, under Jesus Christ, of the Church.

ART. VIII.—*Gall's Lesson System of Education.*

THERE is no longer any occasion to demonstrate the utility of Sabbath Schools, by a formal array of arguments. No enlightened Christian can be supposed to be unfriendly or indifferent to their prosperity. Indeed, when we consider that the institution is founded on a spirit of benevolence as pure as the philanthropy of the Gospel, and as expansive as the whole human family, we cease to wonder that the only obstacles to the universal acknowledgment of its claims, are found in deplorable ignorance, inveterate prejudice, or inexorable bigotry. Nor are we surprised to learn, that even amid the twilight of the sixteenth century, Borromeo, the good Archbishop of Milan, to whom belongs the honoured title of "*founder of Sabbath schools,*" succeeded in establishing them in every part of an immense diocese; and that within four years from the introduction of the system into England, by Robert Raikes, (who seems, however, to have devised the plan without any information as to its previous existence in Italy,) 250,000 children were participating in its inestimable privileges. Whenever the subject has been clearly presented, it has carried along with it the conviction of its incalculable importance, to the prosperity and enlargement of the Church. And the time has now arrived, when the intrinsic value of the system is not to be estimated solely nor chiefly by its apparent adaptation to the wants of society: its claims to patronage rest not on the precarious ground of prospective good, but on the firm basis of past success; on the rich harvest of blessings which it has already gathered into the "garner of the Lord." The institution is justly regarded as an indispensable part of that grand moral machinery, which has been set in operation for the conversion of the world; and we need no voice from heaven to assure us, that it will be found a most efficient auxiliary in hastening on this glorious result. The spirit which it breathes is a spirit of "peace, and good will to men." With a disinterested beneficence which asks no return, it blesses both the dispenser and the recipient of its favours: its charities are universal, for it aims to enrich the whole race of man; and its fruits are eternal, for it seeks only to implant