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ART. I.—REV. NOAH LEVINGS, D. D.

Late Financial Secretary of the American Bible Society, and a Minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church.*

It is the object of this article to give a brief sketch of the life and character of an eminent servant of God, who, during more than thirty years' service in the ministry, filled with honour and success the various stations and offices to which he was called—everywhere winning the affections of the people, and at all times enjoying the confidence and esteem of his brethren, till he was suddenly summoned from his work to his reward.

NOAH LEVINGS was born in Cheshire county, New-Hampshire, on the 29th of September, 1796. His parents being in humble circumstances, he was sent from home to earn a livelihood when about eight or nine years of age. From that time he shared but few of the joys or advantages of the parental home. But, even among comparative strangers, the amiableness of his character and the faithfulness of his service everywhere secured for him friends. His early advantages for mental improvement were very limited—a source of much regret to him in after life. In his case, it was a matter of little consequence that the public schools were poorly supported and poorly conducted; that text-books were defective and teachers incompetent. To him, thirsting for knowledge, yet from very childhood compelled to toil for his daily bread, the few advantages they did afford would have been regarded as a boon above all price.

* The writer of this sketch, in penning these pages, has sought not less to perpetuate the memory of exalted worth, than to comply with the dying request of a dear friend and an honoured Christian brother. [*Note.*—The day before he died, he said,—“I wish the Rev. D. W. Clark, of the New-York Conference, to write my memoir.”]

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To apply these observations to Mr. Layard's discoveries, we would simply say that they do not as yet seem to present a sufficient body of clear, definite, historical *facts* to warrant our putting them forward as strong links in the great chain of evidence which surrounds the sacred Writings. We are not able, although they are in this view of the highest interest, and full of expectation, to *conclude* enough from them to enable us to hail them and reiterate them through the press and the pulpit, as we do, and ought to do, with other clearly ascertained historical matter bearing directly upon the Bible. And we ought to be especially cautious, for the reasons above given, how we make use of knowledge that is so weak to strengthen a faith that is not built upon sand, but founded on the Rock of ages.

In fine, we are yet, as regards Nineveh, just in the early twilight; her towers are yet desolate; the light over her is gray and dim, and all that we can discern by it is undefined and indistinct; but there are streaks which portend a coming brightness, and if the researches so happily begun are as prosperously continued, we may hope ere long to behold her in the clearer light of day.

ART. V.—REV. THOMAS CHALMERS.

Posthumous Works of the Rev. Thomas Chalmers, D. D., LL. D. Edited by the Rev. WILLIAM HANNA, LL. D.

Horæ Biblicæ Quotidianæ. Daily Scripture Readings. In three vols., 12mo., pp. 422, 478, 426.

Horæ Biblicæ Sabbaticæ. Sabbath Scripture Readings. In two vols., 12mo., pp. 436, 507. New-York: Harper & Brothers. 1848-9.

WE have read few works lately that have moved us more than those which stand at the head of this article. It is not that they are eloquent; for, although they give us the dying notes of an eloquence that entranced thousands, the most gifted as well as the most humble, their characteristics are rather plainness and simplicity. It is not that they are learned; for, although they evince the marks of a ripe scholarship, and an extensive scientific culture, they add but little to our exegetical knowledge, and leave most of the *loca dubiæque vexata* of Scripture where they find them. They have many points of excellence, a charming *naïveté* of expression, a rare spirituality, a profound reverence for the revealed will of God, and rapt fervour of devotion at times, that betrays a heart burning with the living fire.

But we value these volumes mainly in their auto-biographical

character, as developments of the author's self,—often unconscious, yet, for that very reason, the more worthy of our reliance. In this respect they remind us continually of Augustine's Confessions. We knew the author before as an eloquent preacher, on whose lips the first minds of the age had hung enraptured; as a philosopher, whose high attainments had obtained for him a reputation which enrolled his name in that august list that appears on the register of the National Institute of France; and as an ecclesiastical statesman whose leadership was acknowledged by thousands, and whose name was identified with some of the most remarkable movements of the present age; but we never before knew him as a man,—as an humble, believing, child-like Christian,—as we know him from these volumes. It is this that throws around them a charm so inexpressible, and rivets us to their pages with so much delight. We are amazed when we think of the stupendous labours of this old man, for many years before his death; but we find the secret of this untiring energy in these volumes. It was the constancy and fervour of his communion with God, in the written Word, and at the throne of grace, that sustained his unflagging energies. In common with Alfred, Luther, Wesley, and every really great reformer, his strength, Antæus-like, was continually renewed, as he was thrown back on the rich maternal bosom from which he drew his earliest life.

These volumes constitute the first part of his posthumous works, now in process of publication under the supervision of his son-in-law, Rev. Dr. Hanna, the eloquent editor of the North British Review. The first three volumes are termed *Horæ Biblicæ Quotidianæ*, and contain his daily meditations on the Scriptures during the last seven or eight years of his life. They were not designed as a learned commentary, or an exercise in homiletics, nor even written for the benefit of others; but composed by the venerable author, as a devotional exercise for the benefit of his own soul. They were his first and readiest thoughts on the passage for the day, clothed in the first and readiest words that occurred to his mind. Hence he used but little exegetical apparatus, and endeavoured simply to bring his mind and heart into warm and living contact with the Word; to look back on the scenes of the olden time, the days of patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, with his own eyes; and to gaze at the awful and glorious facts of revealed religion with an eye of light, and a heart of love. Whilst his method often diminishes the depth and value of his criticisms, it yet confers at times a freshness on his remarks that makes them like the first rich gushings of juice from the unpressed grapes.

The *Horæ Sabbaticæ* are Sabbath meditations on chapters of
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the Old and New Testaments in order. They rise into a loftier region of devotion, and contain a more absolute unveiling of the heart, than we find in the Daily Readings. During the author's lifetime they were kept sacredly from every eye but his own. We therefore find more frequent allusions to personal and domestic affairs—confessions of sins and tendencies to sin—that could only be made to God, and furnish rich material for a psychological study of this great man. It was, therefore, a matter of hesitation for a time whether they should be given to the public; but higher considerations than those of mere delicacy prevailed, and we are admitted to the most secret privacy of the man. We are allowed to lift the veil that hangs over the closet; to see this gifted spirit in rapt communion with Him who seeth in secret; to hear the broken groans and sobs of contrition with which he confessed the hidden evils of his heart; to see the sweet simplicity with which he bowed himself to the orderings of God's providence; and the earnestness with which he sought for light on the path of duty. We find him bringing his own frailties and passions; the state of his family; the West-Port Mission; the varying exigencies of the Free Church; American slavery; in a word, everything that lay on his mind,—directly to the great Source of wisdom and strength. We rejoice to see so noble a monument erected to his memory as this beautiful edition of his works, appearing simultaneously, in uniform style, on both sides of the Atlantic. It will be a fitter, and, we trust, a more enduring perpetuation of his name than the proudest mausoleum that ever greeted the sun.

As the name of Chalmers belongs now not to any one division of "the sacramental host," but to the whole Church, we embrace the occasion furnished by these volumes, to present some remarks on the life, character, and influence of this eminent man.

THOMAS CHALMERS was born in Anstruther, a small village in Fifeshire, on the Frith of Forth, March 17th, 1780. He was sent at an early age to the ancient University of St. Andrews, in his native county. During his academic career he manifested many of the traits of character that were afterwards developed on a wider stage of action. His untiring energy, his frank cordiality, his irresistible *bonhomie*, and his commanding superiority of intellect, were conspicuous among his compeers. His old landlady used to tell with great gusto his exploits among his fellow-students; settling by one cleaving word the dispute that had excited protracted wranglings.

There was early developed in his mind an intense love for physical science. Natural philosophy, chemistry, natural history, bo-

tany, geology, conchology, &c., all shared his attention; but it was to mathematics, and especially to its application to astronomy, that his mind was most powerfully attracted. Nor were his excursions here merely those of an amateur. He studied these sciences deeply and thoroughly; and this early scientific training was manifest in all his subsequent intellectual development. His mathematical discipline gave accuracy, discrimination, and the power of patient, continuous thought, to a mind that would otherwise have run wild with excessive imagination; whilst the wonderful facts of natural science furnished the magnificent imagery, which his daring fancy often used with such brilliant effect. His mind was to celebrate the nuptials, or at least to publish the banns, between science and religion, and furnish in its own splendid attainments a prophetic instance of their future alliance. The great importance, therefore, of this prolonged courtship of the sciences, in fitting him for the great work of life, is very obvious.

There is no reason to believe that at this time he possessed more than a speculative acquaintance with religion. It was an age of coldness in the Church, and skepticism out of it,—with Principal Robertson as the type of the one, and David Hume of the other; and we cannot wonder that he, with so many others, had a form of godliness without any of its power. He had not received that fire-baptism that descended upon him with its rushing mighty power at a later period in life, and which sublimated the massy stores of his mind to a purity and splendour that attracted the world.

He was appointed mathematical tutor at St. Andrews about the time he attained his majority, and continued in this post until he was called to be a junior assistant to the minister of Cavers, in Roxburghshire. This position he soon exchanged for the rural charge of Kilmany, in his native county, near to St. Andrews, in May, 1803. Here he had ample leisure for his scientific pursuits; and could wander at will over the bleak hills of Fife, on botanical and geological excursions, startling the rude peasantry in the lonely glens with his hammer and box, as he sought for some rare flower or curious crystal. He soon reappeared in St. Andrews as a lecturer on chemistry. His first appearance as an author was in the great Leslie case,—that created at the time a deep excitement in Scotland. The chair of mathematics in the University of Edinburgh being vacant, among a great many candidates, (Chalmers himself being of the number,) there were two who rallied around them powerful parties. Dr. Macknight received the support of the clergy of Edinburgh; whilst Mr. Leslie was the candidate of the philosophical party. After a bitter and prolonged struggle, the philosophical party triumphed, and

Mr. Leslie was elected. During the pendency of the contest, Dugald Stewart published a pamphlet against the clerical party, containing a letter from Playfair, asserting the incompatibility of mathematical studies with the duties of a clergyman. This letter roused all the ire of young Chalmers, and provoked him to break a lance with the polished academic, who, having himself passed from the mathematical chair, seemed to furnish in his own case a refutation of his position, or lay himself open to the charge of unfaithfulness as a pastor, or incompetency as a professor. Accordingly, he published an anonymous pamphlet, assailing Playfair with no little asperity. This tract has never been reprinted, and is only referred to as a part of his history. It possesses his peculiarities of style in their most unpruned and exuberant form, and is pervaded by a fierce and unsanctified spirit. It is characteristic of the unhallowed state of the young pastor's soul, that he contended strenuously that "it required almost no consumption of intellectual effort" to discharge pastoral duty; and "that a minister may enjoy five days in the week of uninterrupted leisure, for the prosecution of any science in which his taste might dispose him to engage." The low estimate he evidently put upon the pastoral office, the appalling unconsciousness of its fearful responsibilities, his evident contempt for the office which he held uneasily as a means of subsistence, while his heart was engrossed with other pursuits, and the bitter, scornful, and sarcastic tone that pervades the whole production, furnish a melancholy picture of both the times and the man; a picture over which, when his eyes were opened, we doubt not he wept many a penitent tear.

His next work was on his favourite science, Political Economy; and entitled, "An Inquiry into the Extent and Stability of National Resources." The main principle of this work is, that taxation is no evil; a principle which is pushed to such an extravagant extent, that it becomes almost burlesque. The most important features which the work has for us are, the illustrations it gives of his character. Two points are especially prominent,—an intense dislike of the spirit of trade and the influence of commerce, and a burning military ardour.

His suspicion of the commercial spirit, although modified by subsequent experience, was never entirely removed. It reappears in the Commercial Discourses delivered amidst the merchant princes of Glasgow. It arose from a noble principle in his nature. Loving to look at objects in the light of their real value, and their relations to intellectual and spiritual concerns, he feared the debasing influence of that spirit which estimated everything by the commercial standard

of convertibility into pecuniary gain; and believed that the habits of mind engendered by the tricks and lotteries of traffic were essentially ignoble, and must degrade the souls of those who were drawn into this absorbing vortex.

His military ardour was, we presume, much more effectually moderated in after life, than his antipathy to the commercial spirit; but at this time it was very fervent. Fired by the spirit that was awaked all over Europe by the terrible career of Napoleon, it is not a matter of surprise that, with his heart so completely alive to mere worldly things, he should be fascinated by that dread element in them, then so imposing and powerful,—War. So strong was the martial spirit within him, that he was not content with mere paper exhibitions of it, in treatises on economics, but, minister as he was of the gospel of peace, he actually enlisted in a volunteer corps. On one occasion he visited a friend's house, at some distance from home, in his military costume; and it was so near the close of the week, he was easily persuaded to remain over the Sabbath and preach. This accordingly he did, in a garment of more clerical hue, belonging to his friend, which was terribly strained over the brawny shoulders of Chalmers; but on leaving the pulpit he escaped from its confining restraint to his own costume; and the amazement of the honest villagers, which began in the church, at his strange appearance in black, was completed as they saw his stalwart figure striding through their quiet streets on Sabbath evening, in a flame of scarlet. These eccentricities develop the same straight-forward directness of character, and the same indifference to mere appearances, that were afterwards exhibited in more moderate and unexceptionable forms.

His preaching at this period was, as might be expected, of a cold and superficial cast,—mere ethical disquisition, that played around the head without touching the heart. His dissertations were eloquent, and his displays of intellect prodigious; but they were powerless to the pulling down of the strongholds in the human heart. An amusing instance of the felt incongruity of these fulminations was exhibited in the same church that had witnessed the startling phenomena of the clerical red-coat. He was preaching from the text, "Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup;" and descanting most vehemently on the perils of the generous juice of the grape, to a set of rustics whose highest source of inspiration was "honest John Barleycorn," or mountain dew. At length one of them, "puir daft Jean Pirie," who too often had a "drap i' the ee," and whose sense of the incongruity was quickened by a dim perception of an attack on her besetting frailty, after repeated paragraphs rounding off with the em-

phatic words, "Look not thou upon the wine when it is red in the cup," exclaimed, in a shrill voice that rose clear and startling above the thunder of Chalmers, "Red i' the cup! Troth an' it may be ony o' the colours o' the rainbow, for a' that the maist o' us see o't." Poor Jeanie could feel, in the dimness of her clouded mind, what the gifted preacher as yet had failed to see,—that these splendid declamations on mere morality played above the soul like an aurora, beautiful and glittering, but cold and powerless.

But a change was at hand; a change that was not only to give him new views of the Gospel, but was also to breathe into his whole nature a new energy, and transform him into one of the "few mighty," who are raised up by God in every age of the Church to do his work in human history. Hitherto, he knew nothing of the Gospel but its outer courts; the secret shrine and the incarnate mystery were hidden from his sight. But about the year 1809, he was engaged to write the article on Christianity for Brewster's Edinburgh Encyclopædia. His heart was softened by the loss of a dear friend, and prepared for the reception of the good seed. In prosecuting the studies necessary for this article, he was led to examine the lives of the primitive Christians, the writings of modern apologists, and especially Wilberforce's Practical View. He began to perceive that there was something in Christianity which he had never yet comprehended. At this juncture he was laid on a sick-bed; and, by the blessing of God on the truth which had been brought in contact with his heart, and the counsels of a faithful Dissenting minister, the scales fell from his eyes, and he saw **THE CROSS**. He arose from his sick-bed a new creature. Immediately, conferring not with flesh and blood, he began fearlessly to proclaim the mighty change that had come over his spirit, to confess publicly his previous blindness, and to preach Christ crucified. The quiet parish of Kilmany was stirred to its remotest borders by the words of fire that came from lips so freshly touched with a living coal from the holy altar, and reformations that years of ethical orations had failed to produce, began rapidly to take place under the exhibition of the Gospel.

The fame of this wonderful transformation soon extended beyond his country parish, and acquired for him a metropolitan, and finally a national, reputation. He was accordingly, in 1815, invited by the Town Council of Glasgow to take charge of the Tron Church and parish in that city. It was here, perhaps, that the highest triumphs of his eloquence were achieved. He found a gay, skeptical, money-loving population, whose religious condition was a sort of cross between Blair's Sermons and Hume's Essays,—a barren, hybrid com-

promise between the minimum of piety and the maximum of sin, with enough of the one to kill conscience, and enough of the other to kill fear; with enough of Christianity to keep on good terms with the Church, and yet not enough to interrupt the most perfect understanding with the world.

But the thunder of Chalmers startled them from this dream of delusion. He came to them like one who had gazed on the unseen and the eternal, and was rapt in their awful and transforming visions into a higher element of life and power. The wind, the earthquake, the fire, and the still small voice, had passed before him; his slumbering soul had been startled under the juniper-tree, and he came among them instinct with a living spirit that could not easily be quenched. His scorching denunciations of a spirit wholly given to commercial idolatry; his brilliant vindications of the dignity and grandeur of evangelical religion; his vigorous assaults upon the cold and heartless formalities of the existing Christianity, and his restless activity in devising and prosecuting one scheme of active benevolence after another, gave a new impulse to society in Glasgow, which at length was felt throughout Scotland. The whole city was pervaded with his influence. Men began to feel that there was something in religion worthy the attention of others besides the doting and the dying; and something in Christianity of power and greatness that they had never before conceived. This splendid triumph in Glasgow was the beginning of that third reformation in Scotland, of which the Free Church is so magnificent a monument.

In 1823 he was transferred to the chair of moral philosophy in the University of St. Andrews. To those who knew the stagnant condition of the Scottish universities at this period, so graphically described by Carlyle in his *Sartor Resartus*, the appointment of the *Jupiter Tonans* of the Tron Church excited the utmost amazement. It was as if the glaciers of Grindenwald had sent for Vesuvius,—so cold and petrified was the one, so fiery and explosive was the other. The effect of this movement was soon seen in the ethical class-room, which, from presenting a beggarly account of empty benches, soon became crowded with classes of eager and enthusiastic students. Throwing aside the thread-bare *loci communes* of Aristotle and Seneca, Hutchison and Smith, and all the previous writers who had anatomized the science of ethics, and furnished students with its polished bones, he brought it forth warm and living from the Gospel, a new creation of beauty and light. Instead of being, at best, a mere arena for cold dialectics, and too often a school for secret skepticism, the ethical class became a new and powerful organ of Christianity. Under his leadership it became a moral gymnasium, where

the spirit of purity and love, the spirit of active benevolence and the spirit of missions, were breathed into the hearts of men, who are now toiling amid the mists and moors of Scotland, the steaming and deadly jungles of the Ganges, and the burning plains of Africa. He was great as a lecturer, not because he made any new discovery, or established any new principle in ethics,—for in these respects he was greatly surpassed by Reid, Stewart, and Brown,—but because he breathed the spirit of the Gospel, and his own earnest, enthusiastic spirit, into his academic labours. His lectures, therefore, instead of being dry and learned prelections, were rich combinations of the eloquence that blazed through his sermons, the humour that sparkled in his conversation, and the energy that pervaded his whole character. It was this rare union of qualities that enabled him to send forth an influence from the grass-grown streets of St. Andrews, unrivalled by that of the most gigantic spirits that had preceded him in the department of ethical philosophy.

Up to this point the influence of Chalmers on the Church of Scotland had been indirect, by means of his pastoral and academic position. Although this was by no means inconsiderable, it was yet greatly inferior to the direct influence he was destined to exert in the next station he was called to occupy. In 1828 the chair of Theology in the College of Edinburgh became vacant. This was, by common consent, the post of primacy in the Church of Scotland,—the summit of ecclesiastical elevation and influence in the National Establishment. To this position Chalmers was called by the unanimous suffrage of the Church, and the admitted claim of pre-eminent qualifications. It was here that he exerted his most direct influence on the national Church, moulding and informing the character of her ministry, infusing his own earnest spirit into them, and preparing them for the eventful scenes that were before them. In this post he continued to labour until the great disruption of the Establishment, and in his labours there we find much of the genesis of that memorable exodus. In order fully to comprehend what we regard as one of the great works of his life, it will be necessary to glance briefly at the history of the Church of Scotland.

There have always existed in the Christian Church two distinct elements of character, arising from the mingling of regenerate and unregenerate men in its organization. These elements have manifested themselves variously, and received different appellations, but have always been essentially the same,—whether they appeared as the religion of form and the religion of spirit; the religion of tradition and the religion of Scripture; or the religion of a cold morality, and the religion of a living piety in the heart.

In the Church of Scotland one of these elements was strengthened by the latitudinarian measures of William of Orange, which enlarged the boundaries of ecclesiastical organization, so as to include the most opposite and irreconcilable opinions, and to admit to a share in the government of the Church those who were avowedly and bitterly hostile to its principles. The two elements became embodied in what were termed the Moderate and Evangelical parties. The radical difference between these parties is the same that exists between High and Low Church Episcopacy, Jesuitism and Jansenism, and all similar dualisms that have at various times existed in the Christian Church,—a difference that touches the very vitals of Christianity. The principal point, however, about which the difference was manifested, was the subject of patronage. The one party affirmed that the absolute power of imposing a spiritual guide upon a congregation, vested in a man who might be an atheist and a scoffer, and who might use that power for the subversion of the Church, was unreasonable and unscriptural, alien to the very nature of the Church, and at variance with the explicit terms on which the Church of Scotland consented to the union. The other party contended that it was founded in justice and expediency, and hence must be maintained.

This discussion obviously resolved itself into one on the nature of the Church, the proper limitations of its authority, and the legal relations existing between it and the State. On these points three distinct theories had been promulgated among those who recognized the propriety of some connexion between the Church and the State. The first was the theory of Popery, which held that the Church was supreme in civil as well as sacred things, and the State bound to submit to its jurisdiction. The second, and antipode of this, was what, from the name of its first expounder, was termed Erastianism; which taught that the State was supreme in spiritual as well as in civil affairs, and that a distinct government in the Church was anomalous and absurd. The third, which was the mean of these extremes, held that Jesus Christ was the only Head of the Church; that he had given her a distinct government, or, in other words, vested in her the inherent right of governing within her own sphere;—a right which she could not yield without unfaithfulness to her Head; that in conducting the affairs of religion she was a co-ordinate power with the State, supreme in spiritual things as the State was in civil; that whilst the State had rightful authority *circa sacra*, that is, in the temporalities of the Church, such as providing edifices, assessing and collecting stipends, &c., it had no power *in sacris*, that is, in the purely spiritual functions of the Church, such as de-

termining rights of membership, ordaining, installing, and deposing ministers, &c., and that the State could not more rightfully assume the spiritual prerogatives of the Church, than the Church could the powers of the State. The second of these theories was held substantially by the Moderate, and the third by the Evangelical, party. The Moderates contended, that when a minister was regularly presented by the patron, whatever objections the people might urge, or however unfit the Presbytery might deem him for the office, they were yet bound to induct him; and that if they refused to do so, they could be fined and otherwise punished by the civil court. The Evangelicals held, on the contrary, that whilst the civil courts had entire control of the temporalities, and could award the buildings, glebe, and stipends, either to the patron or the presentee, if the Presbytery refused to admit the call; yet they had no power to constrain the Presbytery to perform the spiritual acts of ordination and installation, contrary to their convictions of right and duty, and hence no right to fine or punish them for refusal to induct. They held that just as each State in our Federal Union is sovereign in its own sphere, and cannot in that sphere be coerced by the General Government; so the Church was independent and sovereign in the discharge of her spiritual functions, and that to force her to act or not to act within this sphere, was essentially tyranny and persecution.

Such, in brief, was the dispute that agitated the Church of Scotland for more than two hundred years. It was a struggle whether Christ or Cæsar should have the headship of the Church; whether the laws of God or the laws of man should be held supreme; and whether the Church should go forward and do her work as she had solemnly vowed to do it, or only at the bidding and by the sufferance of the civil power. The principles involved appeared in various forms and measures that arrayed the parties against each other. When the Evangelicals desired to send the Gospel to the heathen, the Moderates objected that it was contrary to Church order, fanatical, and reversing the proper order of things, by which civilization should precede Christianization. When the Evangelicals wished to confine the professor to his chair, and the pastor to his charge, alleging that each had a work demanding all his time; the Moderates insisted upon pluralities both of parishes and offices, alleging that the double duties could be easily performed. When the Evangelicals wished to open their pulpits to such men as Whitefield, the Wesleys, and Rowland Hill; the Moderates procured the passage of an ordinance forbidding all ministerial intercourse with any clergyman, not licensed and ordained by the Church of Scotland. When the Evangelicals endeavoured by Sabbath-schools and mission-

aries to reach the "outfield" and degraded population of the large cities and the highlands; the Moderates opposed these efforts as unauthorized by the civil power, and therefore tending to sedition. And when the Evangelicals established *quoad sacra* churches, that is, missionary churches that had no permanent endowment or legalized tithes for their support; the Moderates refused to recognize these churches as belonging to the Establishment, and refused to allow their pastors and elders to sit in any church court.

Such was the position of ecclesiastical affairs when Chalmers first appeared in the General Assembly, in 1816. Although before his conversion he had leaned to the Moderates, especially in the Leslie controversy, he now, with the ardent sympathies of his new heart, allied himself to that party most congenial to his awakened and active religious feelings. He accordingly identified himself openly and fully with the Evangelical party, by avowing his belief in the right of the people to be consulted in the appointment of their spiritual teachers. The Moderate party had at this time complete ascendancy, in consequence of the repeated secessions of Evangelical men from the Establishment. But the mind of Chalmers was one that looked not at the numbers holding an opinion, but at its truth, to determine his own course. Seizing, accordingly, the great principles of the spiritual independence of the Church, and her right to do the work assigned her by Christ, untrammelled by civil restraints, he bent all his energies to secure the recognition of these great truths. For twenty years he laboured to infuse his spirit and sentiments into the Church, and to induce her to assert the high prerogatives with which she was invested. At length his labours were crowned with success.

In 1834 the General Assembly passed what was termed *the veto act*, asserting that no minister should be forced upon a congregation, the majority of which formally declared their opposition to his settlement. Thus, after the struggle of a century, was the Moderate party defeated, and the long-contested principle of non-intrusion declared to be the supreme law of the Church. It was thus at length asserted that the State had not the right to force upon the Church her rulers and teachers, and that the consent of the people was essential to the validity of a call.

This act produced a deep sensation throughout Scotland, and an anxious looking for its results. A case soon arose to test its operation. The patron of the parish of Auchterarder presented a minister to its living, against whom an overwhelming majority of the congregation solemnly remonstrated. The Presbytery refused to proceed with the induction. The patron and presentee appealed

to the ecclesiastical courts, but they sustained the Presbytery. They then appealed to the civil tribunals, and obtained a decree of the court of session, by a vote of eight to five, pronouncing the veto-act illegal, and censuring the Presbytery for obeying it; and afterwards fining it £16,000 for doing what it had solemnly vowed to do,—obey its ecclesiastical superiors. An appeal was taken to the House of Lords, and the decision of the civil court sustained.

Here, then, the ecclesiastical and civil authorities were brought into direct conflict. Other cases soon occurred, involving the same principles; the Church of Scotland insisting that she should not be forced to perform spiritual acts by stress of civil power, and the Government insisting on the right to constrain her to these acts by fines and interdicts. Repeated attempts were made at compromise, by Dr. Chalmers on the part of the Church, and distinguished members of her majesty's cabinet on the part of the Government, but without success. It at length became evident that the Evangelical party must yield, or must renounce their livings, and go forth trusting to Him that feeds the ravens. The Government and the Moderate Party seem never to have supposed it possible that a large number of men could renounce all their worldly maintenance, in support of a mere abstraction. Judging from what they knew of human nature, they felt certain that when it came to the stern issue of sacrificing their all, interest would be paramount to principle, and but few would secede.

Such was the state of public feeling in the beginning of 1842. Some hoped that the Evangelicals would be firm; some that they would yield; some believed that the old and dauntless spirit of the Covenant still lingered about the mountains and glens that were hallowed by the blood of martyred witnesses for Christ's crown, and that this spirit would flame out in their sons; others believed that all this display of determination was mere bravado, that would give way in the stern hour of trial.

The eighteenth of May, 1843, was a memorable day for Scotland. Her gray old capital was crowded with the *élite* of the land, who came pouring in from mountain and lowland, to see the last mighty struggle in that contest so long waged between the might of intellect and piety on the one hand, and the might of power and wealth on the other. The grim old towers of Holyrood are graced with the glitter of reflected royalty, and the deep and narrow streets of the Old Town are thronged with eager faces, which scarcely turn to gaze on the glittering pomp of the magnificent train that swept from the ancient palace of the Stuarts to the Cathedral Church of St. Giles. All feel that this day is big with the fate of interests that

lie near the throbbing heart of Scotland. The General Assembly, that day to meet, would decide before the setting sun the destiny of the noblest and purest part of the Church of Knox, and Melville, and Henderson. The royal commissioner having held his stately levee, and listened with his glittering retinue to the opening sermon at St. Giles, the procession again moves through a wedged and living mass to the Church of St. Andrew's, where the assembly is to meet. For hours this church has been crowded to suffocation, except in the seats reserved for the members. At length these seats are filled. In the chair is seated the polished and classic Welsh, whose pure and glowing spirit seems to shine through his too fragile body like a lamp through a vase of alabaster, and whose knit brow and compressed lip tell of unflinching resolve. Beside him is seen the white-haired Chalmers, whose massive frame and swollen brow bespeak the profoundest emotion. Around are gathered men, who as they think of the quiet homes where dear ones are gathered in agonizing suspense, homes where so many days of joy had been passed, but which that day were to be abandoned by their own act, and these dear ones taken forth to struggle with the nameless uncertainties of the future, the eye of the husband and father fills with an unbidden tear; but as they remember the high and holy cause in which this sacrifice is to be made, the tear is brushed away, and the heart of the Christian is nerved with new strength for the offering he was now to make on the altar of principle. Soon the bray of trumpets and the clatter of sabres announce the entrance of represented royalty, who is received by the Assembly standing, and greeted by the Moderator as he appears with the customary formalities. The blessing of the Church's great Head is then fervently implored, and there is a breathless pause. A thousand hearts are throbbing with a quickened pulse, and quivering lips are moved with prayer, as the Moderator turns slowly and firmly to the Royal Commissioner, and, for himself and those who shall unite with him, solemnly protests against the organization of the Assembly as not free; against the encroaching acts of the civil power as illegal and unconstitutional; and renounces all connexion with an establishment whose bond of union had become a yoke of bondage. Then, laying his protest on the table, and bowing to the commissioner, he abandons the chair and walks towards the eastern door. It was a moment of intense excitement and suspense. No man knew who would prove firm in the hour of trial, and the Government had been confidently assured that not more than thirty would leave the Establishment in the last issue. Who then will follow the noble Welsh? First, there springs to his side the dauntless Chalmers,

with his flashing eye and his lion port; then another, and another; the men whose names had shed her brightest lustre on the Church; the men who had toiled most faithfully for the destitute and neglected; one by one they rose and swelled the gathering stream, until one hundred and ninety-three seats have been vacated, and the pride and flower of the Church has departed. From the crowded seats and galleries there throng others to share in this glorious exodus, and to lay down their worldly hopes for Christ's crown and covenant, until, to the blank amazement of the startled commissioner, the whole house seems likely to be emptied, in the excited rush that was made from every part of it, to follow those men who now, with nobler than carnal weapons, "struck for their altars and their fires, God and their native land."

Outside of the house the dense and crowded mass was wrought up to the highest pitch of excitement. The old clock on the spire had struck three as the Lord Commissioner entered the hall of St. Andrew's, and the anxious crowd, that could neither see nor know what was passing within, was moved with the most eager anxiety. "They *will* come out," say the sons of the covenant; "they will not prove recreant to us, whom they have led thus far in this contest, and play the craven in the hour of trial."—"They will not come out," say others; "they will not pluck the bread out of the mouths of their children for a mere abstraction." Doubts, hopes, and fears were busy, and many an anxious glance was cast at the dial in the tower. The lingering hands point to half past three, and yet no one appears from within, and no note of indication is given. Have they indeed faltered? Have they proved faithless to the blue banner of the covenant? But hark! there comes a sound from within like the rush of many waters, and the cry flies from lip to lip, "They come! they come!" and the living tide begins to pour from the guarded door. There are Welsh, and Chalmers, and Candlish, and Cunningham, and Gordon, and Dunlop, and noble and honoured names in the Church; pair by pair, score by score, hundred by hundred, they press forth in glorious procession, with hearts to dare and hands to do the mighty work before them. The long agony is over; the Church is safe; and strong men who had faced death unmoved amidst the roar of battle are unstrung, and the big tears gush from their eyes as their lips murmur the "Thank God! Scotland is free!" That dense, compacted crowd, where the bayonets of the escort could scarcely open a passage to the scarlet-robed commissioner, now swayed from side to side, like the yielding waters before the rushing prow; and down that living lane, where sobs and tears were mingled with prayers and blessings on these brave men, strode four

hundred of Scotland's holiest ministers, and as many of her eldership, ready to do and even to die for the crown rights of the Redeemer. Onward they move silently down the crowded streets that descend toward the Water of Leith, their thoughts busy with the past, the future, the absent, and the dear, until they reach the round towers of Canonmills; and there within the spacious Tanfield Hall, crowded to the roof with eager spectators, they solemnly assemble. As the tremulous voice of Welsh led in prayer, the long pent-up feelings of the vast assembly burst forth in irrepressible sobs and tears of mingled sorrow and gladness: but when the whole multitude stood up, and from four thousand voices there went up, until the towers of Canonmills shook with the thunder of the melody, the high and mournful strains of the old Hebrew faith and fearlessness,—

“ God is our refuge and our strength,
In straits a present aid,
Therefore, although the earth remove,
We will not be afraid.”

every heart was nerved with holy fervour to lay down all for the cross and crown of Christ.

The voice of the whole body called Chalmers to the chair; and then it would almost seem, that, after a quarter of a century spent in battling for the spiritual freedom of the Church, “the old man eloquent” might utter his *nunc dimittis*, as he presided over the first General Assembly of the Free Kirk of Scotland.

With the stupendous exertions that were then put forth to erect churches, manses, school-houses, and colleges, to send missions to Jews and Heathen, and to set on foot all the machinery of an efficient Church; with the amazing labours of Chalmers, who travelled over the length and breadth of Scotland, breathing his own burning spirit into every class, whilst he seemed like the eagle to have renewed his youth; and with the wonderful success that crowned these exertions, we cannot be detained without exceeding our limits. Suffice it to say, that in a great measure by the infusion of his own untiring energy into every class, rank, and age, the stupendous structure of the Free Church went up, like Aladdin's palace, as it were in a single night, and the world stood amazed at the unparalleled spectacle.

The last public appearance of Dr. Chalmers was in May, 1847; when he was summoned to give testimony before the Site Committee of the House of Commons, appointed to investigate the refusal of church-sites to congregations of the Free Church, by the duke of Buccleugh and others. We have read the document containing this evidence with mournful interest. He appears in it like a lion at

bay; whilst the hunters on all sides seek to catch him in their toils. Sir James Graham, in whose veins runs the blood of the ruthless Claverhouse, used all his cold and practised subtlety to involve him in difficulty and contradiction, but was baffled by the clear and frank honesty of the old man. His last testimony to the world thus was one for "freedom to worship God."

He returned home to perform a single public act, and then retire to spend his remaining days as a city missionary. He had chosen a crowded spot in the West Port of Edinburgh, the very spot which the infamous Burke had made the scene of his horrid wickedness, and here he intended to apply his theory of aggressive evangelization, and excavate by patient toil the moral filth and obduracy of this region.

The Free Church Assembly met again, and Scotland's ministers and elders gathered from her borders to gaze once more on "the leader of Israel." On the morrow he was to make his final report to the Assembly, and then resign to younger hands the toil of carrying forward the ark of God. His writing materials were arranged by his bedside, that he might spend his earliest waking hours as he was wont, in the use of the pen. But a brighter morning than that which he expected when he closed his eyes was to dawn upon him. In the stillness and solitude of the night the messenger came; and, apparently without a groan, or the moving of a muscle, or a trace of struggle manifest in his position or his bed-clothes, he gently fell asleep; and when morning came, all that met the gaze of love was that noble form in calm repose, that had rested from its labours while the spirit went up to its reward. It was fitting that he should pass away thus when his labours were done, and that the Church should be gathered in her annual convocation to pay the last sad honours to one of her noblest sons. The vast crowd that poured forth to pay the closing tribute of respect to his memory, was composed of every age, and rank, and name in society, and showed that the loss was felt to be one to the nation, and to the cause of Christianity at large. And as the immense throng of silent, and many of them weeping mourners, poured its living tide along from Morningside to the Cemetery, the one thought that pervaded the mass was that which burst from the king's lips at the bedside of the dying prophet: "My father! my father! the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof."

The problem of Chalmers' life and character offers no difficulties for solution. His grand work intellectually was to bring into closer union the higher forms of science, and the deeper forms of spiritual Christianity. This he did, not so much by making any new disco-

veries in either, as by showing the possibility of their union in his own case. He thus, on the one hand, evinced to the austere bigot, who looked with horror on scientific progress as rank infidelity, that in its highest form science was literally the handmaid of religion; and, on the other, demonstrated to the flippant sciolist, who deemed Christianity a mere anile superstition, unable to bear the scrutiny of severe analysis, that the humblest piety and the loftiest intellect could be joined in the most loving and graceful union, each adorning and strengthening the other. The Blairs and Robertsons, the Butlers and Clarkes of a former generation, had shown that intellect and scholarship could co-exist with a decent and "respectable" form of Christianity; but it was left for such men as Chalmers, Foster, and Hall, fully to demonstrate that the most earnest form of evangelical piety was perfectly compatible with the most exalted intellect and the most finished scholarship.

His work in the religious developments of the age was to contend for the spiritual liberties of the Church, and her right to independent self-government. This struggle began with the Reformation, and has essentially continued to the present day. It is at last the struggle of a living Christianity to put forth its roots and branches according to the law of its inherent life. It is the struggle that was begun by the Reformers, carried on by the Huguenots and Puritans, taken up by the Methodists and Evangelicals, and maintained at this day by the great body of the Dissenters and Voluntaries. It involves two things in every national establishment: first, the revival of the principle of spiritual vitality in the Church; second, the ultimate separation of the Church from the State. The former must as certainly produce the latter, as the swelling of the seed will burst the pod or husk that contains it; and which, however valuable to protect when vitality is suspended, is cast off as useless when the hidden life begins to put forth its mysterious powers. Hence we find that in every case when religion has become extensively revived in the English or Scottish Establishment, the result has been a collision of the sovereignties thus forced into so unnatural a union. A state governed by churchmen, and a church governed by statesmen, have presented in all cases the same invariable result;—inefficiency and inaction when the pulse of life beats low, convulsion and misrule when it was in vigorous action. It is joining together by man what God has put asunder,—the ill-starred nuptials of forbidden parties.

The magnificent experiment of the Free Church of Scotland we regard as one of the most important movements made in this great work since the Reformation; a movement which certainly heralds

the first separation of civil and spiritual jurisdiction in the British government. And whilst it is true that Chalmers and his coadjutors continued to hold to the principle of establishments after the disruption, yet it is also true that their own course and conduct furnish the most unanswerable refutation of their speculative principles. Believing then, as we do, that the spiritual independence of the Church is essential to the final triumph of Christianity; that the establishment of the Free Church is the longest stride in this direction that our age has witnessed; and that Chalmers was to a great extent the soul of this movement; we consider this work as not only the great work of his life, but also one worthy of all the energies of his noble nature. If we were to designate any one attribute of his nature by which he was fitted for these high missions, we would say that it was *his earnestness*. Whatever he did he did it with his might; and whether it was gathering minerals and flowers among the hills of Fife, or thundering his magnificent philippics from the pulpit of the Tron; or handling some great argument in his classroom, until his mind kindled with its own motion, and his gray eye glared with a perfect frenzy of excitement; or grappling with the powerful minds of the opposition on the floor of the Assembly; he in every case threw his whole soul into whatever he undertook. This was the grand secret of his power. Men felt, when they came in contact with him, that they were encountering a reality, a man about whom there was neither cant nor sham,—a man who felt what he professed, and felt it intensely. This fervid, impetuous earnestness either imparted its own fire to those around him, or swept away all obstacles in the tide of its vehemence. Hence, when he spoke men felt that the flood-gates of a mighty spirit were opened, whose deep craters reached down to the range of perpetual fusion; and it was with a kind of breathless awe that they gazed at the fiery torrent that poured with consuming and resistless impetuosity from its glowing source. When he acted, it was with a profound conviction of the practicability and vital importance of the plan he proposed; and the enthusiastic confidence which he felt in it himself, went far to remove the doubts and silence the suspicions of others. He possessed eminently that contagious spirit of lofty enthusiasm and fearless confidence in his own conceptions, that have characterized all great leaders of men, and that have made their very rashness often the surest road to success. This *vis vivida* was united in his case to an element of power that many great leaders lack,—a large and comprehensive sympathy with all human interests and sufferings. Never was the "*homo sum*" of the Roman Menander more fully embodied in the energies and sympathies of a human heart. Men

felt that they were in the presence of a spirit that loved its race, and one that spake and acted for others rather than for itself; and this conviction gave a potency to all his efforts that nothing else could supply. It was this profound conviction of his earnest philanthropy, united with admiration of his lofty intellect, that gave him such a hold on the confidence of the Scottish people as to warrant the strong remark of an eminent British statesman,—“Where Chalmers is, there is the Church of Scotland.”

When we analyze his intellectual character we find but two prominent peculiarities. The first, is the large development of the perceptive faculties. It was this intellectual peculiarity that directed his mind to natural science, and fitted him to excel in those departments that demanded the exercise of the perceptive powers; that determined his thoughts to the details of economics, poor-laws, statistics, &c.; that furnished him with the exuberance of illustration that adorns his discourses, and led him generally to reason by analogy rather than on abstract principles, or by metaphysical deductions.

The other prominent fact in his intellectual structure was imagination. He did not look at a subject in the cold, dry light of pure intellection, but in the warm and vivid light of a poetic fancy. The “body of divinity” or ethics, which in the hands of other analysts became a skeleton of rattling bones, by his plastic touch was transformed into an image of living, breathing beauty, warm and bright with a glorious life. The abstractions of colder and more logical minds were to him concrete, embodied realities. It was this that enabled him to utter the truths of the gospel with such freshness and power, that they seemed brought forth in a new revelation. It was this that enabled him to toil as a city missionary in the darkest dens of vice in Edinburgh; for he felt that he was not only “excavating” the moral filth of the West Port, but working out a problem for Scotland and the world. This power of investing humble and lowly efforts with large and magnificent relations, enabled him to labour with enthusiasm himself, and impart that enthusiasm to others. The peculiar splendour of his imagination, however, is only seen in some of his grand pulpit efforts, and especially in the *Astronomical Discourses*, where it flings a blaze of starry lustre over the whole subject, that seemed to the astonished world like the unveiling of a new heavens and a new earth. This power of investing everything he looked at with the gorgeous glow of his many-tinted imagination, was one of the secrets of the unwasting energy he evinced himself, and the amazing influence he had over others.

It was to the rare combination of these powers in his case that he owed his brilliant reputation as a preacher. That this reputation had a solid and permanent basis, is proved by the admiration of nearly half a century; the admiration not of a small clique, or an interested class, but of all classes and ranks throughout the British empire, including such men as Canning, Jeffrey, and Carlyle. Never perhaps in the history of eloquence has such a reputation been acquired and maintained in the face of such formidable difficulties. He had none of the ordinary graces and tricks of oratory. His voice was not remarkable for either compass or tone; his pronunciation was broadly provincial; his gesture was little more than a sawing jerk of the arm up and down in his most excited moments; he always read his sermons, and kept one hand and his eyes most of the time on the manuscript; yet in spite of all these defects crowds of the first minds in England hung enraptured on his lips. Nor was it entirely the matter of his discourses that gave them their power, for we have some of the best of them in print, and can judge of their merits. An enthusiastic admirer thus describes his preaching:—
“We seem to see and hear him still, bending forward, with his left hand on his manuscript, and his right clenched and elevated in energetic action, while the wildest expression of the eye mingles strangely with the solemn and almost austere determination of that large, firm upper lip, and broad, knotty forehead; and what lies written before him is enunciated in a voice husky, indeed, and tuneless, but very distinct, and in the highest degree earnest and vehement, so as to make you almost feel the words literally smiting your ear, and fixing themselves in your flesh as if with fangs. There was something in Chalmers’ more impassioned delivery that always reminded us of the whizzing of steel upon a rapidly revolving grindstone, with the sparks of fire flying off in showers.”

From this and other sources we gather the elements of his power as a preacher. Looking at truth with an eye that saw its relations to all the grand departments of God’s kingdom, and with an imagination that clothed it with a more than earthly beauty, he felt it intensely himself, and was thus fitted to impress it deeply on others. When, therefore, he came before an audience, he came possessed, in a sense inspired, with the mighty themes he was to handle. Having also a deep yearning of sympathy for the great brotherhood of humanity in their sorrow and sin, he threw his whole nature into the effort to lead them to the truth. Men forgot the uncouth gesture and provincial accent, as they saw him panting and trembling with the deepest emotion; and as his broad frame heaved, and his deep eye glared with the frenzy of his excitement, they thought of that ancient

and powerful afflatus, in which men spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

But when we examine his sermons critically we find much to condemn. They lack the polished elegance and logical strength of Robert Hall; the chiselled, artistic completeness of Andrew Thomson; the antique, Ezekiel sublimity of Edward Irving; and the still, deep thought of John Foster. Yet have they a peculiar strength, beauty, and splendour of their own, with many defects and deformities. There is an utter disregard of all the laws of style and language that custom has ordained. The sentences are long, involved, and tangled. The veriest colloquialisms, the most unauthorized idioms, and, in some cases, even an approach to vulgarisms, appear in his language. Thus, in one of his most magnificent efforts, he tells his hearers that he does not expect by such appeals to break the "*confounded spell*" that chained them to the world. If he had said "*tarnation*" instead of "*confounded*," it would have been at least equally classic and authorized, if not equally expressive. There is evinced an overlooking of the minor graces, that, however we may pardon in so mighty an intellect, would yet have strengthened rather than weakened his mental efforts. The roughest sword will do execution in the hands of a giant; but its edge may be made keener, and its stroke deadlier, by a little polish.

The most offensive trait in his style is its endless amplification and repetition. Take, for example, the following, selected almost at random from his sermons:—

"Why, there are some who seem to feel as if nothing more were required for the completion of this work than merely to adjust the orthodoxy of their creed, and then have done with it. To acquire faith is, with them, as simple an affair as to learn their catechism. Let them only impart a sound metaphysical notion into the head, and this they think will bear them upward into heaven, though their treasure is not there, and their heart is not there. To seize upon the title-deed to heaven, they feel as if they had nothing more to do than to seize upon some certain dogma in the science of theology, and that by keeping a firm hold of this they hold a kind of legal or stipulated security for a place in the inheritance above. Faith is, with them, a mere embrace, by the understanding, of one or more articles in an approved system of divinity. It is enough, in their imagination, to have a right to glory, that they be intellectually right about the matter of a sinner's justification in the sight of God. Heaven is somehow looked upon as a reward to the believer for the soundness of his speculative opinions. The faith which is unto salvation is regarded in no other light than as the bare recognition of certain doctrinal truths, and the salvation itself as a return for such recognition. The indolence of a mere theoretical contemplation is thus substituted for the practice, and pains-taking, and perseverance of men, in busy pursuit of some object to which they are bending forward with the desire and the diligence of an earnest prosecution."

Here it will be perceived that the same specific idea is asserted

in every sentence, with scarcely a shade of additional meaning. The whole paragraph, in musical phrase, is a series of variations. This peculiarity in his style gave truth and point to the comparisons made by Robert Hall, likening his style to a kaleidoscope, which presented at every turn the same elements, only in different lights; and to a door on its hinges, in which there was motion, but no progression.

But, in spite of these defects, there is an undoubted charm about his style which we would not deny or depreciate. This charm consists, mainly, in a certain stateliness and gorgeousness that it possesses, combined with an occasional quaintness and alliteration, that make his sentences at times ring like cymbals. His thoughts are rarely clothed in the simple costume of common life, but come forth in the robe and buskin of the boards, with the mien and tread of royalty. Hence the most ordinary conceptions have a *loom* of magnificence by the refracting power of his style, and seem dilated to a magnitude, and robed with a splendour, that belong only to the drapery in which they appear, or the medium through which they are seen. We will not call his style theatrical; for this term would suggest ideas of hollowness and show which did not belong to his mind. He was eminently an earnest, sincere man; and we find as little affectation of greatness, or mere *acting* the great man, in his writings, as we do in any writer of eminence in modern times. He is as simple and unconscious as a child. But yet his style is peculiarly *scenic*. It is picturesque rather than statuesque, owing its power rather to the gorgeousness of its colouring than to the delicacy of its finish. In this respect he stands midway between Edward Irving and Henry Melville, (if he was not in some respects their model, especially of the latter,) having some essential points of resemblance to both, and yet without the wild Pythonic *furor* of the first, or the consummate histrionic art of the second.

We cannot, in the room that is left us, attempt even a summary, much less a critique, on the voluminous writings of Dr. Chalmers. When the eight volumes of Posthumous Works are published, they will amount to thirty-three volumes duodecimo, embracing treatises on Natural Theology, Evidences of Christianity, Didactic Theology, Ethics, Political and Ecclesiastical Economics, Expositions of Scripture, Sermons, Prefaces, Tracts, Essays, &c., &c., covering a vast extent of topics, and illustrating the rare versatility of powers and attainments by which his mind was distinguished.

The work by which his reputation was first widely established, and which we may select as furnishing a fair illustration of his peculiar powers, is his *Astronomical Discourses*. Few persons will

forget the intense delight with which they first read these remarkable productions; and from this feeling we can understand the enthusiasm with which they were greeted on their original publication. This burst of admiration was owing, in part, to the novel nature of the subject discussed, and the vagueness of the popular conceptions on the subject of astronomy. It was the opening up of a gold region unknown before; a region whose glittering sands were stars, and whose limits "the flaming bounds of space," the boundless sweep of the universe. The very facts of astronomy were but imperfectly known by the great mass of readers; and even when known, there was an uneasy suspicion that there was some undefined danger to be apprehended to the ancient, popular faith, from the startling developments of this wonderful science. On the part of the skeptic there was an undisguised sneer at the old Ptolemean theory of religion, that made the earth the centre of God's government, and all other orders to revolve in their spheres of existence around it. On the part of the believing there was a disposition at least to make a truce with this daring and eagle-eyed discoverer, if not to indulge an absolute and jealous hostility. How profound, then, was the amazement and delight of the Christian world, when the blazing scroll of the heavens was unrolled to them, all glittering with the most magnificent revelations; and yet all tending to confirm the revelation made in the written word! How deep the thrill of surprise when it was found that its mighty constellations included *a cross*! The very infidelity of the age was thunder-struck with this splendid *coup-de-main*, and forgot the bitterness of defeat in the prowess of the victor, and the splendour of the triumph.

But when the magnificent pageant has passed by, and we begin calmly to examine the train of argument pursued, our first enthusiasm will begin to subside. We do not regard it as any objection to these Discourses, that the train of thought, and the principal arguments adduced, had been first struck out by Andrew Fuller, in his Answer to Paine. Fuller's sketch is but a single chapter in his larger work, and possesses but the single merit of clear, cold logic. Chalmers seized the bare conceptions thus furnished, and clothed them with the starry splendour of a mind imbued at once with an intense love of science, and a profound reverence for religion; and, flinging over all the purple light of his gorgeous imagination, he became to Fuller, in the apologetic aspect, what La Place was to Newton in the scientific department of this magnificent field of knowledge. But yet we very much question whether the rigid logic of the argument did not suffer in the translation.

The infidel objection was, that the immense magnitude of the creation, as developed by modern astronomy, reduced the earth to so insignificant a relative position, that it seemed as preposterous to hold it, with Christianity, to be the centre of God's moral universe, as it had been, with ancient science, to believe that it was the centre of God's material universe; and that if the falsity of the latter assumption was demonstrated, it drew after it, by necessary inference, the falsity of the former.

How does Chalmers meet this objection? After a splendid sketch of modern astronomy, he descants on the modesty of true science, a point which the objector will not dispute. He then enlarges on the extent of the divine condescension, as revealed in the discoveries of the microscope. To this the obvious reply of the objector would be, that it was not the extent or minuteness of the condescension alleged by Christianity to which he objected, but to the mode in which it was said to be exerted, and the amazing disproportion between the provisions and the objects provided for; as if it were asserted, not only that God had clothed the animalcule with the most gorgeous vesture, and robed it in a mail of purple and gold, but had created an ocean, or a continent, for the sole and only purpose of its residence. He then dwells on the knowledge of man's moral history, and the sympathy felt for him in the distant places of creation, and the contest for an ascendancy over man among the higher orders of intelligence. The evident reply to this would be, that the only proof of these points was to be drawn from the very records under discussion; and to assume their truth by thus arguing on assumptions which they alone furnished, was a sort of *petitio principii*. The Bible is the only foundation upon which these positions rest; to repose the truth of the Bible, therefore, on these positions, was to reverse the natural order, and to begin to build the house at the roof instead of the foundation. The last discourse is on the slender influence of mere taste and sensibility in the matter of religion; a point that of course does not bear directly on the question in discussion. Such is a brief analysis of the argument of these memorable and magnificent Discourses.

To us the ground taken by Fuller seems much more unanswerable. Planting himself on the native dignity of the human soul, he argues that to save a soul is a mightier work than to create a world; and that regarding the superiority of spiritual to material greatness, the work of redeeming a world of immortal souls, perhaps the only world that had apostatized, swelled into a grandeur that threw all material splendour into the shade; and that to object to the smallness of the field on which it is alleged this mighty work was per-

formed, were as absurd as to object to the greatness, or doubt the achievement, of the victories of Marathon or Waterloo, because they were fought on but a few acres of ground instead of measureless square leagues. He then adduces the considerations so splendidly unfolded by Chalmers, to show that the probable exterior relations of redemption fully harmonized with all the discoveries of astronomical science. Had the course of argument thus sketched out by Fuller been more closely followed by Chalmers, we think the power of the Discourses would have been greatly augmented, whilst their splendour would not have been diminished. Their grand defect, beyond the *splendida vitia* of their style, is the want of logical method and compactness in unfolding the argument,—a want which will be readily seen by comparing them with such works as Hall's Sermon on Modern Infidelity, or Campbell's Answer to Hume on Miracles.

As an expositor of Scripture, we cannot assign Chalmers a high rank. His Lectures on Romans, and still more fully his Posthumous Works, prove that his excursions into this vast field were but short and narrow in their range. He exhibits, it is true, the same grasp of mind here that he does elsewhere; but he has evidently not even attempted to master the stupendous materials accumulated by modern exegesis. He could, however, well afford to leave to other minds the mastery of those laborious details. The eagle eye of such a mind was perhaps not constructed to the focus necessary for tracing etymological roots.

We cannot enter on his character as a theologian, for this would lead us greatly beyond our limits; and the complete elements of a proper decision are wanting until the appearance of his Institutes of Theology, in the forthcoming series of Posthumous Works.

Our judgment of Dr. Chalmers may then be briefly summed up. Without being either a great logician, a great rhetorician, or a great scholar, he was a great orator and a great man. Whilst his writings, voluminous and effective though they have been, will do less to mould the important opinions of his generation than those of obscurer men, his life will leave as broad and enduring an impress on the history of the Church and world as that of any writer of his age. Whilst his style is on all hands acknowledged to be seriously defective, it has left its mark on the religious literature of Scotland, with a distinctness that cannot be overlooked. Without perceiving or even desiring the inevitable results of his efforts, he has achieved a noble victory for the liberties of Christ's Church, and struck some of the heaviest blows in that work that must be completed by such men as Baptist Noel and Mr. Dodson. He has shown in his own person the

possibility of uniting the keenest relish for science, and high attainments in some of its departments, with the humblest and purest evangelical piety. As a man he has reminded us of the beautiful prophecy, —“The child shall die an hundred years old.” He had all the unconscious simplicity, the sweetness, the filial trust, the loving and joyous spirit of the little child, combined with the rarest attributes of intellect and the ripest fruits of experience. Coleridge has somewhere defined genius to be the susceptibilities and feelings of childhood, carried forward in their vivid freshness to manhood. We know of no more accurate definition of the character of Dr. Chalmers. He grew old in his body, but never in his soul; the snows of age were sprinkled on his brow, but never on his heart; and even when his sun hung low and cold in the distant west, it flung over the whole field of vision the brilliant glow of hope and trust, that brightened the scenes of life’s earliest morning. His was a broad and genial nature, that touched in its ample extent the remotest opposites, and shared the enthusiastic love of natures so hostile in their antagonism, that they seemed to know nothing in common but their common affection for him. The cynical Carlyle, the fastidious Jeffrey, the thoughtful Taylor, the skeptic, the scholar, and the philosopher, all mingled their tears with the narrowest textuary of the strictest sect, and the humblest and lowliest of the toiling thousands of Scotland, in weeping over the loss of one who loved and enlightened them all. The Church of the living God has a glorious heritage of noble names, but she has few over which she can hang with a deeper throb of mingled admiration and love, than the memory of the brilliant, the lofty, and the child-hearted Chalmers.

ART.—VI. THE PHILOSOPHICAL STUDY OF LANGUAGE.

THIRD PAPER.

IN our former articles on this subject, the Etymological Method (as we entitled it) was judged, chiefly by its fruits, and condemned. A critical examination of its method of procedure would, perhaps, aggravate the condemnation. But we are now, we suppose, authorized to lay the Grammatical form out of the question, and to turn our attention entirely to the science, so called, of Comparative Philology.

And the first question is, Does Comparative Philology conform strictly, as is pretended, to the science of Comparative Anatomy,