

THE
MERCERSBURG REVIEW.

OCTOBER, 1867.

ART. I.—COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS. JULY 25, 1867.

BY J. W. NEVIN, D. D., PRESIDENT OF FRANKLIN AND MARSHALL COLLEGE,
LANCASTER, PA.

I. TO THE GRADUATING CLASS.

Young Gentlemen:—Just fourteen years have elapsed since I stood in this place to speak my parting words to the last Senior Class of the old Marshall College, which was at the same time the first Senior Class of the new consolidated institution, into which the old college had become merged in this place. That solemn public act closed, as I then thought finally, the relation in which I had stood to the college as its President through previous years; and in view of this fact, it seemed proper to make my farewell to the graduating class a sort of general farewell to all who had ever been under my care as students. The Baccalaureate became in this way an oration to the Alumni. A desire has been expressed from different quarters, that the resumption of my old office should be marked on this occasion by a similar comprehension or gathering up of the past in the present; and you will not therefore take it amiss, if my address to you now, as the first graduating class under my new term of service, be so widened and enlarged in its

scope as to take the form of a fatherly address to all who have gone forth from the institution, whether actually present here to-day or not—both the older generation of students from the classic shades of Mercersburg, and the later succession that has been added to these veteran ranks from the halls of Franklin and Marshall here in Lancaster. Into this general brotherhood, this goodly fellowship of kindred academic life, you have been solemnly ushered by the honors of this Commencement Day. I see you before me now as part of the great family which has thus received you in its bosom; and, as the organ of your common *alma mater*, what I have to say to you farther, at the present time, I say to all.

II. TO THE ALUMNI IN GENERAL.

To you then, Sons of the College at large, the representatives of its life through thirty years, I now turn my address. In doing so, however, the old familiar compellation of the baccalaureate falls helpless to the ground. I can no longer address you as *Young Gentlemen*. Most of you at least have outgrown that title. It will no longer fit especially the students of Mercersburg. In my mind's eye, indeed, they are still young; and I seem to renew the vigor of my own life, when I call to remembrance the youthful forms, replete with the generous spirit of youth, in which they passed before me, with daily familiar intercourse, in former years. Need I say, my beloved Pupils, that it is an easy illusion with me, in the midst of such retrospective contemplation, to think of you still as "boys," and thus almost to forget the present in the past? I doubt not but that at times you are yourselves borne away by the power of the same illusion; and that amid the festivities in particular of your present Alumni Reunion, you have been tempted to look upon it as not only your privilege, but your right, to be boys again in the fullest and best sense of the term. But the fancy is too bold; and it is best that we keep it, you and I, to our own hearts. You are no longer boys; allow me to say it in all seriousness, you are no longer even *young gentlemen*, in the proper acceptation of the address. It

would sound ludicrous to this audience, not knowing you as I do, to hear you characterized by any such title. My own eyes as I gaze upon you, correct with rude shock the fond hallucination of my feelings in regard to the point. You are not yet any of you old men, properly speaking; but you are all fast becoming old; and it will require only a few years—years that will pass, O, how quickly—to advance you all to the gray-haired dignity of fathers, in the generation which has heretofore known you only as sons. I say this primarily of the old Mercersburg students. But the first classes of Lancaster are, of course, pressing hard after them, in the same career of age; and all of you together know, that the dreams of youth are forever behind you, that the stern realities of life are around you, that its responsible burdens are full upon you, and that what lies before you is no longer play nor preparation, but the long, laborious work of earnest and full-grown men.

I do not address you to-day then as young men. It is not right that either you or I should forget, or try to forget, the course of time in which we are solemnly involved. The present occasion, rightly improved, cannot fail to bring home to us the fact that we are getting old; and to remind us how far we have come and where we now stand, in the great world movement to which we belong. Rightly improved, however, it cannot fail also to rejuvenate and freshen the sense of the present by the wholesome recollection of the past. I would not have you forget your college days. You have no wish yourselves to forget them. I would not have you forget that you were once boys. There is a natural piety, here, as Wordsworth terms it, which should ever bind our manhood to our childhood and boyhood, our later to our earlier life; and without which, we have full reason to say, our later life can never be either solid or sound. The boy is in a profound sense father to the man; and the vigor of a true man, be well assured, on even to green old age, depends largely on the power he has to carry along with him the spirit of his boyhood to the last. Cherish in such view the memories that are made to crowd upon you on this anniversary occasion. Give room to your youthful feelings. They cannot

make you young again, in the old outward way in which you were once young. But they may help at least to keep you young at heart; which is something far better; better for yourselves, and better also for the world in which you are called to work.

A retrospective view of life is in any circumstances interesting and instructive. But it becomes especially so, where the period it overlooks is found to be of great public significance, added to the meaning it may have for ourselves separately considered. In such view, let me refer again to the interval which has passed since my last address to the graduates of Marshall College spoken from this place in 1853. As a period simply of fourteen years, it may not seem to amount to much in the general chronology of the world; whatever serious changes we may feel it to have brought with it for each one of us, in our own persons and in our immediate personal surroundings. But look at these fourteen years again, in what they have brought to pass for this nation, and for the history of the world, and tell me what language is sufficient to express properly their momentous import. The distance which separates us to-day from the first Commencement of Franklin and Marshall College in 1853, is but feebly represented by any such brief chronological measure as this. It is a period, in which, as we look back upon it, days seem to lose their ordinary sense, and the flight of weeks is turned into the flight of years. It is more for each one of us immeasurably, than the simple change it has wrought in our own age. In the general movement of the world, we have lived scores, I had almost said centuries of years, in passing through it. For the life of the world, as we know, does not run forward with equal continuous stream; there are times with it, when the slow course of ages gathers itself up, as it were, into the compass of moments, and the meaning of a thousand years is precipitated into the rush of a few days. Then it is that the far past and the far future, the "ends of the ages" as St. Paul calls them, seem to meet and come together in the instantaneous present. Of such character, most emphatically, is the period here under consideration, the brief space of time that has

passed since I last stood before you as now in the summer of 1853. Since then, the index-hand on the dial-plate of the world's history has swept an arc, which may be said fairly to confound all human calculation. The sense of ages has come into view through our late American war, and is now pouring itself forward with cataract force in its mighty issues and consequences—political, moral, social, economic, scientific, and religious—as never in any like period of the world's life before.

Regarded simply as an act in the drama of our own national existence, the political struggle through which we have passed must be acknowledged to be the grandest that has ever had place among men. The world has never before known such a war; the life and death struggle of such a nation as this, caught suddenly in the anaconda folds of so vast a rebellion born from its own bosom; a war of such huge proportions, carried forward on so broad a field, and hurried through to such overwhelming results in so short a period of time. For the nation itself, of course, the importance of it, in its relations to the past and in its bearings on the future, is beyond all description, and indeed as yet beyond all knowledge or imagination. All that may have been new or great, or full of interest, in the previous history of the country: its discovery more than three centuries ago, its colonies and colonial times, its war of independence, the foundation and adoption of its constitution, and whatever has been of account in the enlargement of its resources or in the development of its powers since; all is found at last, I say, gathering itself up into the grandeur of this last crisis, and showing itself to have been significant only as it has served to prepare the way for its advent. Here, in a most profound sense, it may be said that a nation has been born in a day. For all that had place before in the life of these United States deserves to be considered, and spoken of, as little better than an embryonic existence, over against the new order of being we have been ushered into through the mighty parturition pains and throes of the late war. Whatever we may have thought of the war itself during its progress, now that it is over, if we have any faith in the future of the nation at all, we can-

not possibly fail to see in it the presence of a power, which must determine our character and destiny as a people, in the most universal and radical way, for all time to come. It is in vain to disguise it; we have passed through a revolution; or shall I not say rather, we are still in the midst of a revolution, greater than any yet known to the nations of Europe; greater altogether than that from which our political freedom dates in 1776; a revolution wrought out organically from the inmost forces of the national life, which in such view amounts to a regeneration, profound and deep as the foundations of this life itself. Well may we bow before it with wondering, awe-struck admiration; for it is the wonder of all wonders in these last times. It has been to the nation like the baptism of the Red Sea. Old things have been made to pass away by it; and now, lo, all things are becoming new.

How much this revolution means becomes still more evident, when we take into view, in connection with it, the way in which the conditions and terms of our national life, externally considered, are found to correspond with it; so demanding and requiring it, as it now seems, that it is hard to see how they could have been met and satisfied in any other way. It is in the light of such correspondences especially, springing from the depths, and coming, as it were, from the farthest ends of the earth, that the hand of God reveals itself in history. Without dwelling upon the subject at large, let it suffice now to say, that this nation, as we believe, was planted and kept apart in the Western world for high purposes peculiar to itself; that it has been possible for it, in the conditions in which it has heretofore stood, to obey its vocation or mission successfully thus far under its first relatively defective organization; that with its own growth, however, and the progress of things generally, this was becoming more and more impracticable; when all at once, and as it were to meet the emergency, the political crisis before us burst forth in fire and blood, making room for a new ordering of the State, which, it is to be hoped, will be found answerable to its enlarged necessities and responsibilities in all time to come. Our late war has been for us, in this view, immeasurably more

than the simple putting down of the rebellion from which it sprang. It has borne us through the pillars of Hercules, out into the broad ocean of a life, of which we had no conception before. It has roused us, as a people, to self-consciousness; lifted us into manhood; brought home to us the sense of our own resources; and given us a history, it has been well said, "which even the war powers of the old world must respect and acknowledge as a title to the fellowship of great nations." It has brought us suddenly abreast with the great moving forces of the age, and compelled us to hold ourselves in line with them from this time onward, as the necessary condition of our whole future existence. It has settled the question of our national unity, before always more or less problematical and uncertain. It has tested the strength and stability of our republican constitution, and demonstrated the possibility of popular self-government on a scale, and to an extent, beyond all that it had entered into the heart of man hitherto to imagine or conceive. We are fairly bewildered and lost, in trying to take in the measure of our present greatness, the momentum of our present onward course, as compared with all we have been before. The colossal proportions of our late war, have made the nation all at once gigantic. The popular mind has grown familiar with gigantic thoughts, gigantic purposes, and gigantic deeds. We are ready to bridge the Hellespont, or tunnel Mount Athos, at a moment's warning. Never before has the world seen or heard of such wonders of energy and strength, as have attended, and are now still following, the four years' struggle through which we have passed. They have distanced all comparison, confounded all calculation, turned all precedent to confusion and shame. No wonder that the hoary state craft of Europe is made to stand aghast, at what might seem to be so universal a breaking away from old time formulas and rules; for here, emphatically, all the traditions of the past are found to be at fault. Our public debt, in this view, is sublime; and still more so, of course, our public credit maintained thus far through it all, and the stupendous fiscal administration which is moving steadily onward, in conjunction with the free pleasure of the people, to its full, speedy liquidation.

And more sublime, in some respects, even than the war itself, is the work of political reorganization now in progress, by which the nation is to be formed and fitted for the career of glory that now stretches before it, with seemingly interminable prospect, through the far distant future. Of this coming greatness, what tongue can adequately speak? How can we reflect on the truly continental character which has come even now to invest all the elements of our growth; the rebounding vitality, the feeling of endless strength, the sense of inward enlargement, with which we have come out from our Briarean struggle; our mighty territory, reaching from sea to sea; the rate at which our population is increasing every year by the natural law of birth; the incalculable tide of immigration (a more important *Völkerwanderung* than any the world has ever witnessed before), by which the life of all European nationalities is now to be poured into our bosom in a way as yet hardly dreamed of by any; the new fields of untold, unimaginable wealth, on the earth and under the earth, which are soon to make our national debt seem lighter than a feather; the victories of art over nature on all sides among us, by which mountains are levelled and valleys raised before the march of modern improvement, by which time and distance are more and more surmounted, and the compact unity of the country is made to keep pace fully, and even more than fully, with its greatest geographical expansion: how, I say, can we reflect on all this (crossing the continent, for example, with the eloquently thoughtful eye of a Colfax), and not feel ourselves absolutely overwhelmed by the solemn sense of what is around us, the thrilling apprehension of what is before us, in the present condition of our country!

But to estimate properly what this condition involves, we must take into consideration more than these relatively outward elements and forces, as concerned in the working out of the problem it brings to our view. There are concerned in what is thus going forward, at the same time, the historical forces of the world's modern mind and thought, the issues of its past science, the results of its past morality and religion, the deepest instincts of its present spiritual life, its profoundest political

ideas,—in a word, we may say, the inmost philosophy of the age. These spiritual and moral forces, now deeply at work everywhere in our modern civilization, no less, I say, than the more outward powers before spoken of, are tending with accumulating strength toward the introduction of a new order of life for the world at large, a new era altogether in the world's social and political history; and in doing so, it is plain that they are throwing themselves more and more, with united volume, into the onward moving destiny of our vast American Republic. Here they are to have their central field of action. Here only they are to find full outlet for their impetuous tide, and free commensurate scope for its overflowing course in time to come. We feel all this sensibly now, as never before, in the grand political epoch which has come upon us within the last few years; and this especially it is, that makes the epoch beyond expression solemn, as gathering up in itself the sense of centuries past, and carrying in its womb at the same time the sense of centuries yet unborn. Here now, it would seriously seem, are to be settled and solved the great life questions, that are becoming more and more the burden of humanity, the mystery of the last days, the ominous approximation of the present order of the world to its full winding up in the second coming of Christ.

In all that has now been said, we are made to feel the prospective greatness of this country in a way it might have seemed extravagant to dream of only a few years ago; and can thus apprehend, in the light of it, the unutterable, illimitable significance of what has lately come to pass in our history. The curtain is suddenly lifted before our eyes, revealing to us an entirely new scheme in the drama of our national existence, and opening to our astonished gaze a vista of coming wonders more marvellous than the wildest creations of Arabian tale or Persian romance. The nation is shut up, we now see plainly, by the very conditions of its existence, to a career and destination without any sort of parallel in the history of the Old World. The massive kingdoms of Asia, and the more thoroughly organized governments of Europe, are to be repeated here in a form that shall be found

to unite in itself the highest ideal of both—political mass, in the widest and largest view, actuated throughout by the unity of free, intelligent soul. For the country, it would now seem to be providentially ordained, must remain one, in spite of all territorial extension. This at once sunders it from all transatlantic examples. It can be no second England, or Germany, or France; just as little as it can reiterate the ancient life of Greece or Rome. Then, with boundless territory, must come, also, boundless population; a tide of life that shall outswell now all past rates of growth; rising and spreading with magic rapidity; sweeping, rolling, rushing over the broad, reclaimed wastes of the sunny South, and over the prairies, forests, and sierras of the mighty West; millions upon millions, a multitude which no man can number. And along with this again, in simultaneous progression, a corresponding development of material resources and power; wealth springing out of the earth, and flowing through the rivers, and bursting from the mountains on every side; cities in magnificent profusion; the vast arteries of commerce and trade, together with the nerves of electric intelligence, reaching over the continent in all directions, and binding it together with the sense of common interest, and the consciousness of common life. Westward, of a truth, the star of empire, the march of civilization, takes its way; and having now passed round the globe, the movement would appear to have come really to its conclusion here in touching the shores of the Pacific, while the historical course of the centuries, at the same time, is precipitating itself, with strange synchronistic coincidence, upon the same continental theatre; to work out, as it were, what St. Peter calls the "end of all things," on a scale answerable to the dimensions of so vast a problem. For no one can imagine, surely, that our American life, or the life of the world rather, in this, its last form, can ever advance upon itself, by entering upon a new circuit of civilization and culture in Asia. *Thus far, and no farther!* is the law prescribed for it by the Pacific Ocean. Here the end has come round again to the beginning; the historical ages have run their predestined course; the extremities look each other in the face; the dumb prophecy of

China, holding in stagnation, since the days of Confucius, well-nigh half the population of the globe, is confronted at last with its own far-off fulfilment (though without understanding it), in what are soon to be the multitudinous millions of these United States—a population equal to its own, not Mongolian, but Caucasian, in the latest style of this dominant race, with all its energies developed in full force, and brought into universal action. All things conspire plainly to show here the presence of the last times, and to proclaim the coming in, on a grand scale, of what must be considered the closing scene of the world's history, in its present order and form.

The interests of the whole world thus are bound up in what has been going forward of late in our country; and we are made to feel solemnly that the national crisis through which we are now passing is, in very truth, a world-crisis, greater and more decisive than any the world has ever previously known. It is no longer the dream of American vanity, simply to speak of the significance of America in this way. It is fast becoming sober earnest for the nations of Europe themselves. Our late war was echoed in the universal heart of the Old World, and met responsive vibrations everywhere in its conflicting opinions, sympathies, and wishes; as the issue of it, also, has entered deeply into the soul of all countries, and is already working out consequences which no foresight of man can measure or reveal. In a profound sense, the struggle was representative for the race at large. The tread of its armies, the thunder of its battles, shook the entire earth, and wrought deliverance for humanity such as has never been wrought by the agency of war before. In the language of Professor Goldwin Smith's late brilliant address in England: "Not the fields on which Greek intellect and art were saved from the Persian; not the fields on which Roman law and polity were saved from the Carthaginian and the Gaul; not the plains of Tours, on which Charles Martel rolled back Islam from the heart of Christendom; not the waters over which the shattered Armada fled; not Leipsic and Lutzen, Marston and Naseby, where, at the hands of Gustavus and Cromwell, the great reaction of the seventeenth century found

its doom, will be so consecrated by the gratitude of after ages as Vicksburg and Gettysburg, Atlanta, and those lines before Richmond which saw the final blow."

All with us now, as a nation, has been, and still continues to be, world-historical in the fullest sense of the term. We know it, and feel it, more and more continually, on all sides. Our thinking and working have come to be of boundless signification for the human race. The greatest questions of life, the last problems of history, are fast crowding upon us for their solution. Here is to be settled, on a grand scale, how far men are capable of self-government in a truly free way; how far the interests of public authority and personal independence can be made to meet harmoniously in the same political system. Here is to be issued and adjudicated practically the old arch-controversy, between the rights of man, as they are called, and the duties of man. Here are to be met, and answered in some way, the tremendous politico-economical and social problems, which are even now stirring the lowest depths of our modern civilization, and threatening like a subterranean mine to blow it into ten thousand fragments. Here is to be resolved the great ethnological question, which is to determine finally the relation of the inferior races to the Caucasian in the consummation of the world's history. Here is to be seen, how far material prosperity and mere humanitarian culture (the life of man in the order of nature) can be made to follow their own law, in harmony with the higher interests of virtue, morality, and religion. Here are to be shown, in the end, we must believe, the mightiest achievements of science, the greatest wonders of art, the most stupendous victories in the service of commerce and trade. Above all in interest for us, here must be settled the great ecclesiastical issues, with which the whole Christian world is wrestling at the present time, and which are felt by thousands everywhere to involve nothing less than the question of life or death for the universal cause of Christianity itself.

Yes, my beloved hearers, there is no room now, I think to doubt it. Here on this Western Continent is to be the arena where the Church Question, which all truly earnest men feel

and know to be the greatest question of the age, is to be fought out, if I may use the expression to its last consequences and results. We cannot take our answer to it quietly from the Romanism, or Anglicanism, or Continental Protestantism of transatlantic Europe; nor yet from the Græco-Russian and other forms of Christianity, that challenge our attention in the far East. On the contrary, these older church interests, if they are to maintain their standing in the world, must throw themselves into the new conditions of our American life, and prove themselves able to master them, and to bend them to their own service in a free way. Christianity here, of course, if it is to remain true to itself, can never cease to be historical; can never abjure its connection with the past; as it is required to do by the radical sects that are continually springing up like mushrooms on its path. But neither on the other hand, can it be a mere mechanical outward tradition. It must enter into active struggle with the seething elements around it, and assert its necessary form, whatever that may be, as the "law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus." Here then the controversy between Christ and Antichrist, the mystical battle of Armageddon, must be waged to its ultimate decision. That is to be, of course, a struggle between faith and unbelief. But the unbelief, we have reason to be sure, will not be so much open infidelity, as the false show of faith itself—the metamorphosis of Satan into an angel of light, opposition to the Gospel claiming to be the truth and power of the Gospel in its fullest sense. And so the ultimate matter in debate will not just be: Is the Bible true and worthy of confidence as God's word? but this rather: Is Christ real, as the perpetual presence of a new creation in the world through which only life and immortality are brought to light? The war will fall back practically to the basis of all positive Christianity, as we have it set forth comprehensively in the Apostles' Creed. The questions will be at bottom: Is the Creed true? Has Christ come in the flesh, as is there affirmed? Is what we are told of the grand movement of the work of redemption in His Person, fact or figment? Did He indeed go down into death and hades, that He might re-

turn again leading captivity captive, and ascend up on high so as to fill all things, and to become head over all things to the Church? Is there in virtue of all this an order of grace in the world—the mystery the Creed proclaims in its article of the Church—a divine constitution of life and power transcending the whole order of nature; which as such is a necessary object of Christian faith; which the gates of hell can never prevail against; and in which alone are comprehended the redemption and salvation of the world through all time? These are questions that go to the very foundation of Christianity; and the issue involved in them is nothing less than the general right of Christianity to be regarded as a strictly supernatural system of religion, over against all forms of natural or simply humanitarian religion, usurping its name and pretending to stand in its place. It will be, in one word, the old battle between rationalism and faith, the powers of this present world and the powers of the world to come, advanced now to its deepest, most inward and most universal form; on which will be found to be staked the truth of all revelation from the beginning; and which in its last grand crisis shall serve to usher in, we may trust, the bright appearing of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ Himself, when He shall come to be glorified in His saints and admired in all them that believe.

All signs thus, herald the approach of a new era in the history of the world, more important than any which has gone before; and all conditions join to show, that this era is to have its central development here, on this Western Continent, and in the bosom of our American Republic. But now, what view are we to take of the elements, agencies, and forces—political, moral, educational, and scientific—which are marshalling themselves on such vast scale, on all sides, for the accomplishment of the mighty change that is thus before us; and what judgment are we to form of their relation ultimately to that “end of all things,” in which the cause of Christianity, if it be of God, is to come to its final and complete triumph, as we have just seen, over all opposing powers? No inquiry can well be more interesting or practically solemn than this, however diffi-

cult, for all who look thoughtfully at the present condition of the world, and desire in view of it to order their own lives to the wisest and best purpose. I can only glance at the subject now in the most general and cursory way.

In the view of many, the revolutionary forces which are now everywhere at work in our modern civilization, causing old things to pass away and all things to become new, are themselves, not simply precursive, but in the fullest sense preformative, of what is to be at last the deliverance of the world from its present state of bondage and sin. The redemption of humanity is to be reached, they suppose, through these powers working themselves out to their own natural results. They see in the political, social, scientific, and educational movements of the age, the very factors of the world's final regeneration; and fondly dream and talk of a "good time coming," a millennium near at hand, in which the last sense of Christianity shall be reached, and the tabernacle of God made to be with men; through the triumphs of mind over matter; by means of steamships, Atlantic telegraphs and Pacific railroads; by universal civil freedom, universal knowledge, universal brotherhood of races and nations, universal politico-economical wisdom—making altogether a reign of mundane righteousness, that will show itself a reign at the same time, of boundless outward prosperity, comfort, and wealth. It is easy especially to be carried away with this sort of thinking, in looking at the momentous changes, which are going forward in our own country, world-significant as they can be seen plainly to be at the present time, and profoundly linked as they are no less plainly with the central power of the world's life in the form of morality and religion. All must feel that the power of Christianity is deeply at work in these wonders. All must feel, that if Christianity be the end of the ways of God among men, these wonders cannot possibly be without reference to the coming of His kingdom—that they are in fact progressive victories and gains on the side of this kingdom, which are serving to make room more and more for its full ultimate advent. And then what more natural than to see in them at once the actual presence of Christianity it-

self, working in them and through them immediately to its own ends, as something identical with their first and nearest signification; and thus to take them as being, in and of themselves, true manifestations of faith and righteousness in the highest Christian sense of these terms. Thus loyalty and patriotism are made to be synonymous with devotion to the service of God; battle-fields become the gate of entrance into paradise; heroes are canonized into saints; martyrs of liberty are exalted into martyrs of Christ; statesmen and politicians put themselves forward as the chosen prophets of God's will; and the march of events (though it may be but John Brown's soul marching on—God only knows whither), is trumpeted to the four winds of heaven as the stately goings of Jehovah Jesus Himself, riding forth prosperously to subdue the nations under His feet. Thus in every way the successful appliances of science, art, business, or politics, to the well-being of men in the present world, are counted to be directly the power of the everlasting Gospel fulfilling with free course its own heavenly mission; and so it comes to pass that the power of the Gospel, the cause of true evangelical religion, is supposed at last to reside mainly in the world under its secular character, on the outside of the Church and her sacraments altogether. Creeds and confessions serve but to retard the chariot of salvation. The enemies of Christianity claim to be its heroes and apostles, its truest representatives and its best expounders; and the nominally Christian world, alas, is found only too willing on all sides to admit the claim.

This, I say, is the great temptation of the age—the temptation of resolving the whole idea of God's kingdom in the world into the powers and forces of the world itself, stirred and set in motion by the presence of the higher life that has been brought down into it, without being lifted still into its true sphere. So it was in the beginning of Christianity in a more outward way, when all the elements of Grecian and Oriental thought were roused by it to the task of constructing new philosophies, Gnostic and Platonic, that might take its place, and do for it better than itself, its Heaven-commissioned work. It was hard then

to stand firm and fast in the faith of Christ. But now it is harder still; for the relation between the two orders of grace and nature, the contact of one with the other, has come to be far more inward and close now than it was then, and the conflict involved in it is for this reason, in the same proportion, more spiritual and profound; so that the very elect are in continual danger of being deceived by it to the loss of their own steadfastness. Let me then, in the way of warning, reiterate solemnly on the present occasion what I have tried to make the burden of my teaching on this subject in former years. Nature is not Grace. That which is born of the flesh is at last, in its highest sublimation, flesh only, and not Spirit. It can never, in its own order, save the world. Ye, surely, have not so learned Christ. However the earth may help the Church, you know that it is not in the power of the earth to create the Church, or to take into its own hands the office and work of the Church. The mastery of mind over matter, whether in the way of knowledge or of art, is not in and of itself the raising of man to glory and honor. The race can never be brought right, and made to be what it ought to be, by machinery, or mere outward social economy of any sort; and just as little can it be redeemed by politics, education, or science. Its true regeneration, if there be truth in the Gospel, must come ultimately from above, and not from beneath. Humanitarianism is not Christianity; and the Gospel of such men as Emerson, Theodore Parker, Garrison, Wendell Phillips, and others whose names come easily to mind now in the same connection, is not the Gospel of Jesus Christ as it lies before us in the New Testament. The millennium it promises is not the reign of the saints foretold by prophets and apostles; and it is only too plain, alas! that the agencies and tendencies which are held to be working toward it, carry in them no sure guaranty whatever of millennial triumph in any form. All the signs of the time, as we have seen, betoken universal and fundamental change. But we have no assurance in these signs, that the change will move on victoriously in the line of universal righteousness and truth. On the contrary, it is all too plain that the elements and forces which are bringing

on the new era, are themselves fraught with a power of evil, which may prove altogether too strong in the end for all they appear to have in them as a power of good. Along with titanic strength, we see at work on all sides titanic corruption and sin. The very effort that is made to scale the heavens, in the way of material aggrandizement and politico-social self-exaltation, seems to invite upon itself the thunderbolts of Divine wrath, and to foreshadow a confusion worse than that of old on the plains of Shinar. We cannot trust the ground on which the age is standing. We know that it is volcanic. We cannot look forth with full security on the boundless ocean before us. It may be—our hearts tell us—an ocean of storms and wrecks, more terrible than any the world has ever yet known.

This is one lesson we are required to take home to ourselves, in the present state of our country and of the world. But it is not the only lesson. We are required, on the other hand, to see and feel that the great things which are now coming to pass around us, and looming into sight before us, are indeed part of God's plan for the final bringing in of His kingdom; and that we, therefore, can be true and faithful to this cause, in our generation, only as we throw ourselves with free consciousness into the movement, and endeavor to work in and through it for Christian purposes and ends. We have no right to ignore the rushing tide of history, or to stand aside from the torrent with which it is bearing all things in its own direction. Indeed, we cannot do so, if we would. For history here is beyond all question world-history; and we must move and work wakenly in the bosom of it, if we are to have any real life whatever in the life of the world. This does not mean, of course, that we are to surrender our minds blindly to the general spirit of the age, as being in and of itself the Spirit of God (*vox populi, vox Dei*); or that we are to trust the movement of the age, as being at once in its reigning factorial forces the wisdom and power of God, working positively toward the ideal of a perfect humanity. We may fear, or we may be sure, that the relation of all to the coming end will be found at last to be that of negative, more than direct positive, preparation for its advent; even as the old Oriental

and Grecian worlds prepared the way, in their vain endeavors "by wisdom to know God," for the coming of Christ in the flesh. But even in this view, the historical significance of the movement cannot be questioned, and we are bound to take interest in it accordingly. We must be children of our country, and also children of our age. So much is demanded of us, both by our philosophy and by our religion. Only let us try to be so, by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, in such sort that we shall be likewise all children of the light, and true sons of God in being at the same time true sons of the Church.

Among other interests requiring to be held thus in union and correspondence with the vast advancing movement which is upon us, the cause of education especially deserves to be spoken of at this time—being as it is, the bond of our Academic brotherhood, and the common interest which brings us together on the present occasion.

Like all other interests in the country, it is thrown into agitation, and forced toward revolutionary change, by the power of the general revolution through which the country is now passing. It is moving historically with the movement of our national history at large. Evidently we have come to a sort of crisis here as elsewhere, and a new era of education is breaking upon us, no less than a new era of politics and religion.

The thoughts of men with regard to the subject are expanded; and along with expanded thoughts, are coming to be revealed new zeal, new liberty, new activity, in its service. Indeed, one of the most striking features of the time is the disposition which has begun to be shown, in every direction, to patronize and encourage learning and education in all forms. Donations on the part of rich men, in favor of literary institutions, are growing to be munificent, in some cases even princely. The scale of college endowments, and college organizations, is everywhere enlarged. Even in our own State, proverbially slow and niggardly heretofore in the cause of letters, a new spirit is showing itself at work. Normal schools and collegiate academies are with us now the order of the day. All our old colleges are seeking to double their strength; while the munificence of one man has planted on the banks of the Lehigh lately a new insti-

tution, which threatens at a single bound to surpass the foundations of the whole of them together.

But it is not only the outward economy of education that is undergoing enlargement and change in this way. Still more worthy of note, is the corresponding change that is going forward in its inward economy. This is still more directly the result of the general revolution in which the age is involved, and shows more significantly at the same time its ruling character and drift. All the conditions of the age, all the conditions especially of our American life, carrying in its bosom at this time, as we have seen, the inmost and deepest historical forces of the age, form in themselves for the minds of men what may be called a powerful determination now toward outward and material interests, the conquering of nature, the arts and methods of political well-being,—in one word, the reduction of the present world in every way to the service of the human race. Hence the demand, on all sides, for forms of education, that shall be found ministering everywhere directly to this general object; and in conformity with it, as we see, all manner of attempts to bring our schools and colleges into line with what is thus felt to be the inevitable law of the age. Hence new courses of study all over the land, in which the practical and utilitarian figure as the main thing in science, and learning is made to resolve itself, in great measure, into the knowledge of matter, simply, and nature.

A striking illustration of the power this way of thinking has among us may be found in the *Smithsonian Institution*, standing as it does in some sense at the head of our educational interests. According to the terms of its magnificent endowment, it was founded for the *Increase and Diffusion of Knowledge among Men*. In the organization of it, we are told, “no restriction is made in favor of any kind of knowledge, and hence each branch is entitled to, and should receive a share of attention.” That is the theory. But see now, how it has been carried into effect. From the commencement of its operations in 1847, down to the present time, it seems to have been quietly assumed that the increase of knowledge among men must be

taken to mean only the promotion of science under its predominantly physical aspects; and the "Smithsonian Contributions," accordingly, are found to be devoted to this object throughout, with no recognition whatever, apparently, of the necessity of science under any other form. Physical Geography, Coast Surveys, Aboriginal Monuments, Palæontology, Geology, Zoology, Botany, Magnetic and Meteorological Observations, Chemistry, Mineralogy, Agriculture, and the Application of Science to Arts; these, and kindred subjects, engross the activity and the income of the Institution; while all that is comprehended in the culture of Mind for its own sake, Morality, Humane Literature, Metaphysics, and Philosophy in all its branches and forms, is silently ignored and forgotten, as having nothing to do with the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men in any way. The fact is curious, certainly, and significant; and may be taken as a proclamation to the world, on a large scale, of what Science, Education, and Progress, are coming more and more to mean for the spirit of the Nineteenth Century, as it is now sweeping all things before it in the new-born life of these United States.

It is no business of ours to denounce or oppose the changes by which other colleges are seeking to adapt themselves to the educational demands of this spirit at the present time. Let us hope that all such experiments may work toward good ultimately in some way. It is enough for us to know that we, as the friends of Franklin and Marshall College, are not called upon to fall in with the movement. Our circumstances do not allow us to cope, if we would, with the stronger bids that are made for popular favor in this form; and there is no need or occasion for us to be putting forth our strength for what can be more effectually accomplished from other quarters. Our vocation, too, it is plain, is altogether different. If we are to be of any account in the cause of learning and education, it must be by our holding on steadfastly to what has been the reigning purpose and character of this institution from the beginning; and instead of finding in the present bearing of things a reason for changing our course, we should see in it rather only new

reason for our continuing unswervingly true to it to the last. For if the general bearing of the age be, in the way we have seen, more and more toward merely material interests and outward ends, it is but all the more necessary that our testimony, if it have been worth anything heretofore, in favor of education for its own sake and for purely spiritual or inward ends, should not now be relaxed, but be made, if possible, more firm than ever. This, especially, is needed at the present time; and in no other way possibly can we, with our resources and opportunities, do better service to our country and our generation.

Let it be our ambition, then, and our care, to maintain in vigorous force here, an institution that shall be devoted supremely to liberal education, in the old and proper sense of the term; *liberal*, as being free from all bondage to merely outside references and ends, and as having to do, first of all, with the enlargement of the mind in its own sphere. This, after all, must remain the true conception of education forever. We need not quarrel with other forms of knowledge and skill, that are held with many now to carry with them the whole force of the name. Let them pass for what they are actually worth, in their utilitarian, practical, and professional sphere. But no such forms of knowledge can ever be sufficient, of themselves, to complete the organization of a true human culture. Underneath all such practical superstructure, if it is to stand, must be at least a basis of solid spiritual thought; and if many, in their studies, make all in all of the outward, it will only be the more necessary always that some (though few) make all in all of the inward. In such a time as ours especially, and in view of the grand historical crisis, through which, as a nation, we are now passing, it is all-important that the working spirit of the country should be leavened, to some wholesome extent, by a corresponding thinking spirit. Never was there a time, when there was more room or more need for education, regarded simply as a discipline of the soul for its own sake. Agriculture, mining, and civil engineering, are of vast account; but not of so much account, by any means, as the development of a strong and free spirit in men themselves. It still remains true, as in all ages,

that ideas are the deepest power in the world; and the most salutary forces of the world's life will ever be found to be, in the end, not those which men are enabled to draw from the storehouses of nature, and in this way, as it were, from beyond themselves, but those that are comprehended in the right ordering and proper constitution of their own minds. There lies the end emphatically of all true education.

Let it not be imagined, however, that in thus opposing the spiritual to the physical, I mean to discourage the study of nature, or to detract from its importance in a course of academical training. For us in this world, the spiritual depends everywhere on the physical, has its root in the physical, starts forth from the physical, and is qualified and conditioned by the physical throughout. There can be, therefore, no effectual study of mind, that is not grounded, first of all, in the study of nature; and so, of course, no thorough or complete education, without the natural sciences. In this view, the zeal which is now shown in favor of these sciences, and the wonderful success with which they are pursued, are a matter for congratulation; and form unquestionably one of those pregnant signs of the time, which we are bound wisely to respect and turn to account, in seeking to give historical direction to any part we may take in the cause of education at the present time. All we need to protest against in the case, is the insanity of making nature, in its own sphere, the end of all knowledge; the madness of imagining, that moral interests can ever be subordinated safely to material interests; the wild hallucination of dreaming, that the great battle and work of life for man is to be accomplished by physics and mechanics, by insight simply into the laws of nature and mastery of its powers, by chemistry, geology, mineralogy, metallurgy, and other such studies, by polytechnic ingenuity and skill applied in all manner of ways to business and trade. There is a higher view than all this, in which the study of nature becomes itself the study of mind, and the material meets us everywhere as the sacrament of the spiritual and divine. It is the view presented to us in the first chapter of Genesis, where all lower forms of creation are described as rising organ-

ically, stage after stage, to the completion of their full sense ultimately in man; from the light of whose presence then, thrown back upon time, they come to be irradiated with a portion of the same glory that belongs to man himself as the image of God. It is easy to see how, in such view, room is made in our scheme of a liberal education for the largest use of natural science; how it is, that there can be no right philosophy of spirit, which is not, at the same time, a philosophy of nature in its profoundest sense; how physics and metaphysics go hand in hand together, each helping the other to its proper perfection, and both joining to bear the soul up finally to those empyrean heights, where knowledge ends in religion, and the vision of the world is made complete in the vision of Him who is before all worlds—the same yesterday, to-day, and forever.

ART. II.—ENGLISH LITERATURE AND THE REFORMATION.

BY E. E. HIGBEE, D. D., PROFESSOR IN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY,
MERCERSBURG, PA.

We propose, in the following article, to make some general remarks upon the literature of England, keeping especially in view the influence exerted upon it by that epoch of the modern world,—the Reformation of the sixteenth century. This epoch, so significant in history, marks the concentration of tendencies and forces active long before it, as well as the beginning of a new era, in which, as thus concentrated, these tendencies and forces form the germs of a long-after development and growth. Both processes, therefore, that going before and that which comes after, must be taken into view, and in their natural order, before the English national life or literature can be properly understood.

The barbaric tribes of Europe came under the influence of classic civilization, when they were yet without any proper national organization. They roamed the forests in rude multitudes, and on wild adventure, when Greece and Rome had already reached their