

THE
MERCERSBURG REVIEW.

NOVEMBER, 1852.

VOL. IV.—NO. VI.

CYPRIAN.

Fourth and Last Article.

THE year 252 brought with it new trials for the Christian Church. There would seem to be a mysterious sympathy between the moral and physical worlds, by which every great catastrophe or crisis in the first is found to be marked more or less distinctly by corresponding tokens and signs in the second. When the foundations of society are about to give way, men's hearts are made often to faint and fear by strange signs of wrath in the course of nature. So it was before the destruction of Jerusalem; and something of the same sort we meet with in the last period of the old Pagan empire of Rome. The decline of the state, the breaking up of the ancient order of life, seemed to draw along with it calamity and disaster in all conceivable forms. The universal course of the world was so ordered, as to proclaim continually its own vanity and misery. On this subject we may learn much from Augustine. Long before his time however, these signs of wrath had begun to show themselves in the economy of God's providence, filling whole lands with ap-

VOL. IV.—NO. VI.

33.*

he undertakes to rule out of court the mind of the ancient church, as though in varying from such arbitrary rule it must of course vary to the same extent also from the Bible!

Our controversy then with Dr. Proudfit, we repeat, as heretofore with the Puritan Recorder and the Baptists, regards the symbolical authority of the Apostles' Creed. Is it still of binding force for the universal church *in its proper historical sense*, the only sure basis of all other symbols, as it was held to be in the beginning; or has it run itself out into an obsolete fiction? That is the question, which brings fully into view the deep solemnity of this whole subject. What nonsense to prate of orthodoxy and heresy by other standards, where the original mould of the Christian faith is thus rudely dashed to pieces! We take no lesson here from any man, who constructs his whining homily on a formal repudiation of all the old oecumenical symbols, with the venerable Apostles' Creed at their head. We say to him rather, in the withering words of the Saviour: "Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the *beam* that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye, and behold a *beam is in thine own eye?* Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye, and *then shalt thou see clearly* to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye."

J. W. N.

CLOSING NOTICE.

WITH the present number, the *Mercersburg Review* is brought prosperously to the close of its fourth year. As it is felt that its particular mission has been in some sense accomplished, and that it cannot easily be carried forward farther in its past character, it is thought best now to throw the publication into a somewhat different form. It may be expected to appear hereafter, accordingly, in new series, as a *Quarterly*, under some change of title, with more miscellaneous contents, and in more generally popular manner and style. *My own special connection with the work, I wish to have it understood at the same time, is now at an end.* I may write for it occasionally, among other contributors; but I shall be in no way responsible for its editorial management, either directly or indirectly.

Mercersburg, Nov. 10, 1852.

JOHN W. NEVIN.