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THE VALUE OF AMERICAN INSTITUTIONS.

IN attempting to penetrate the spirit of American Institutions, to explain the phenomena, which they present, and to show the relative position of American civilization in the history of the world, it is improper to suppose that these things have taken place in some accidental manner,—that the outcasts of the old world, carried by some fortunate wind to the American shores, and favored by some undefined influence of our hills and vallies, our fountains and streams, commenced the superstructure of American culture, of American government, and American enterprize. So too it is equally as absurd to trace our American life to the noble spirits, that figured so extensively in our early history, as if it were owing to their originality, or powers of invention, that we have been made to occupy our present position in the history of the world. Our historic characters, or great men, and we have such as have made an impression on the world, were the embodiment of a spirit, that was not peculiar to them, but which was shared with them by others in distant lands; and how could they have been its originators? The time-spirit would disdain so recent an origin; it comes to us from afar, from the wreck of ancient, and venerated institutions; from the ruins of empires, from the tomb of former glory, and bears in its

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on the mournful occasion, by the writer, and prayer offered by the Rev. Mr. EMERSON, of the Presbyterian Church. The announcement of the death of one so well and so favorably known awakened feelings of deep sorrow and profound regret throughout the whole Church. All felt that a great, and good, and very useful man in Israel had fallen, and that, too, before some of his most important labors on earth were finished. The Master called him home much sooner than the Church had hoped. But even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.

Baltimore, Md.

E. H.

THE ELEMENTS OF CHRISTIAN SCIENCE.

A Treatise upon Moral Philosophy and Practice. By WILLIAM ADAMS, S. T. P., Presbyterian of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Wisconsin. Philadelphia: H. Hooker. 1850. Pp. 379, 8vo.

THIS book is eminently entitled to respect. The author belongs to the far West; having charge of the Episcopal Seminary at Nashotah in Wisconsin, an institution founded in missionary zeal and full of promise, as it would seem, for the future, but in the bosom still of the wilderness and far removed from the usual resources of literature and science. The work however is one that would do honor to the oldest and best endowed seat of learning in the country. It carries with it indeed no particular array of authorities, no imposing apparatus of outward scholarship; but it is still evidently the product of very respectable learning throughout, and of this in its best form, the reading and study of other days incorporated by earnest and profound reflection into the very substance and life of the mind itself. Mr. Adams has carried with him to his present retreat, what is of more account than all libraries, the capital of a full European education, with resolution and power to use it vigorously for spiritual ends in the way of private study. He shows himself in this view a thinker, truly worthy of the name and having some right to be listened to with respect. He is not the mere echo on the one hand of what has been spoken or written by others; his thoughts are the living fruit of his own intellectual and moral life; but neither on the other hand does he pretend to spin them with pure originality out of his separate brain, as though the worth of knowledge depended on its being reduced

as much as possible to the character of insulated subjectivity and particular opinion. There are, we all know, cases of such pedantic affectation, where it is pretended, in the sphere particularly of mental and moral science, to ignore and forget, (if we may speak of forgetting what has never been known,) all that others have brought to pass, and to fall in on the resources of purely private thought and speculation, for the solution of all questions and problems in a perfectly independent and original way; under the imagination that such a course discovers more than ordinary intellectual vigor, and is adapted for this reason to command attention and reverential respect. But no such upstart self-born science can ever be of any truly solid and enduring growth. The book before us is of quite a different character. It bears the impress of original thought on every page, beyond most books that have appeared in this country; but it is the originality of ripe previous culture, which is neither self-born nor upstart, but carries with it the authority that rightfully pertains to genuine learning.

As its title imports, the work is devoted to the interest of Ethics. Its general purpose and drift however are not at once clear, either from the title or preface or first few chapters. This forms indeed a serious bar at the beginning to the interest of the book, even for a thoughtful reader prepared to enter earnestly into the subject of which it treats; and is likely of course to stand still more in the way of its popularity, with those whose reigning temper is not of such earnest cast. It requires something of an effort of patience and attention, to become fairly and properly introduced to the object which the author has in view, so as to move along with him freely in the progress of his discussion. Such patience and attention however are sure to be rewarded in the end, with a full compensation for all their cost. The scope and purpose of the work gradually become clear, interest is enlisted more and more in the subject for its own sake, and the result can hardly fail to be for any earnest reader a wholesome discipline of the heart as well as a true benefit for the understanding.

All individual existence, the author tells us in his preface, is conditioned by two elements, first *nature* and secondly *position*—this last including all the relations, in the midst of which and by means of which it fulfils its destiny. To extend this principle upward to the Life of Man, to apply it to his Moral Being, is the object here in hand. "We take it for granted herein," he says, "that man has a moral nature and constitution, as well as an animal and intellectual being; and that to man as a moral

being there are external facts and institutions that correspond to this moral nature. This treatise seeks to discover, define, and specify distinctly, the various faculties of the moral constitution of man, and so to classify them that they may assume a definite scientific and practical form. And to do this, it considers them in the two-fold point of view, as in themselves first, and secondly their relation to those other external fixed facts which bear upon moral life, as the external circumstances of physical nature do upon the powers of vegetable or animal existence. This, as I have said, is my leading principle, and in reference to this it is, that I define Ethics to be the Science of Man's Nature and Position."—*P. 5.*

The work is divided into six books. In the first we have a consideration of the nature of Man, under the general inquiry, *Is it good or evil?* The author finds it to be constitutionally good; that is not indifferent to good and evil, like that of brutes, not essentially evil like that of devils, and not dualistically compounded of two different substances one good and the other evil. Some writer, noticing the work in a late number of the *Church Review*, takes exception to this representation, as not being in his apprehension altogether orthodox. It is admitted that Mr. Adams affirms in the most unqualified way the fact of Original Sin; but his view of the essential character of the fallen nature of Man is held to be at variance with the proper force of this fact as taught in the Articles of the Episcopal Church. The true doctrine is, we are told, "that the Will, the Affections, and the Reason, are not now essentially good; that they are vitiated and evil, by an infection which extends to their very nature; that what they need is, not *mere position*, where their own inherent and essential life may develop itself; but, over and beyond all this, the implantation or bestowal of a new and supernatural Element—the imparting of a life which did not before exist, as well as to wash away the stain and guilt of original defilement." Mr. Adams, it is added, "has but re-echoed the sentiments of a certain Dr. Taylor, in his famous 'Concio ad Clerum,' which a few years ago set Congregationalism in New England into a blaze; prompted to the organization of the East Windsor Seminary, &c." Nay, he goes even beyond Dr. Taylor; for whereas this last stopped with simply denying the Evil in Human Nature, Mr. Adams actually affirms the Good. The opponents of Dr. Taylor, according to the reviewer, have not scrupled to charge upon him nothing more nor less than rank Pelagianism; and he has no hesitation in saying, that he too finds it impossible to look upon what Mr. Adams says on this subject in any more favorable light.

But if we have not wholly missed the sense of our author, this criticism is entirely unjust, and proceeds itself on a theological conception which is anything but sound and right. The position maintained here with regard to human nature is not that of Pelagius, and by no means re-echoes simply the doctrine charged on Dr. Taylor. That there is "a fault and corruption of the nature of every man that is naturally engendered of the offspring of Adam," and that this infection "hath of itself the nature of sin," according to the Anglican Confession, Mr. Adams, we presume, has not for a moment thought of calling in question. The idea of such a real corruption of our nature as makes righteousness forever impossible without the implantation of a new and higher life, runs through his whole book. But what he feels it necessary to guard against, is the imagination that this corruption involves such a depravation of the very substance or essence of man's nature as leaves it in itself incapable of a true moral restoration to righteousness and life. This is the Manichean error, which has by no means gone out of date with the old sect so called, but under new names and phases, like the Pelagian heresy itself of which it is the natural reverse, continues to make itself felt in the Church through all ages. There is a certain style of orthodoxy which is particularly exposed to the danger of falling into this extreme, from the very merit it is disposed to make of its opposition to the wrong which lies on the other side. It measures its zeal for the supernatural character of Divine grace, in the work of salvation, by the extent to which it carries its depreciation of all that belongs naturally to the human subject. Man must be shorn of all goodness, and turned into a demon or a brute, in order to put the more honor, as is supposed, on the power that accomplishes his redemption. But of what account is it to avoid Pelagianism in this way, if in doing so we fall into the arms of Manicheism? Will it magnify the idea of Man's salvation, to conceive of his nature as so lost and depraved that it is in itself no longer capable of being inwardly unfolded to righteousness, but requires for this purpose a re-creation, or new physical construction, imparting to it a wholly different essence? It is one thing surely to say that man cannot save himself, and quite another that he has in himself no capability of being saved even when acted upon by a higher power. The realness of the Christian redemption, as an article of faith, involves both of these conceptions, and falls to the ground with equal necessity by the loss of either. The nature of man is so fallen as to be truly and wholly disabled for righteousness, without the descent into it of a higher

principle from Christ; and still, in the midst of this ruin, it remains salvable, capable of redemption, susceptible of being entered and wrought upon restorationally by this heaven-descended-grace; which it would not be certainly, if it had become intrinsically brutish or diabolical. To conceive of man's redemption as analogous with a fiat of omnipotence, turning an ox for instance into a pious saint by a miracle of mere power, is to rob the whole mystery in truth of its proper sense. Redemption is not strictly creation, the making of one thing into another absolutely new and different; but the deliverance rather of that which has been restrained and oppressed into its rightful freedom, and the advancement of it thus to its own true perfection. It lies then in the very fact of our human redemption itself, that our human nature, though fallen, is still neither essentially evil nor indifferent to good and evil, but in itself good, and so capable of being recovered by Divine grace to the holiness and glory for which it was originally created.

This we take to be the whole sense of Mr. Adams' doctrine on this subject; which seems to us to be very plainly also the doctrine of the Bible, as well as the view that has the best right to be considered orthodox in the sense of the old Catholic Church, as holding midway between the Pelagian and Manichean extremes, one full as much at war with the true grace of the Gospel as the other. The highest idea for man is Moral Good, and this comes into view fully only in God. The goodness of our nature, that which still shows in us the image of God notwithstanding the fall, and that which makes room thus for our redemption although left to itself it could never originate or produce any such deliverance, appears in the inward determination with which it is carried towards God always as its proper end and rest. Wherein consists then the acknowledged fact of the *fall*? In the withdrawal of that Presence of God which formed for man, in his state of innocence, a natural rule of life and complete law of action; and then in the disorder and insubordination of our natural faculties, following this in the way of consequence. "Here then we are able to answer the question, How is it that man does evil, although in his nature he is good?—Simply it is this, that the very fault and deficiency of his nature is in the *natural inability to do* that which is in accordance with the Will and Law of God; in other words that which is Good. His nature is good, and aspires towards it; the Law that speaks to him is good. Tradition teaches him of Good; all things call forth the desire and the will, but the *ability is wanting by nature.*"

The nature of man is complex, made up of various powers and activities. Still as thus manifold its true form requires at the same time an absolute unity. This depends on a certain inward relation and harmony of its several parts. Hence the distinction of governing powers and subordinate powers. Neither of these are in themselves naturally bad; but where the due relation that should hold between them is lost, we have necessarily a state of evil on both sides. The governing powers, according to our author, are the will, the conscience, the affections, the reason; the powers that should obey are passions, desires, feelings, appetites, instincts. "Now herein is man's nature of itself, in consequence of the Fall, weakened, that the lower faculties, the passions, desires, feelings, appetites, instincts, these tend to assume the place of the higher, and themselves *to rule* when they ought *to be ruled*. And secondly, the ruling faculties are weakened so as to permit this insubordination."

One of the last charges that can fairly be brought against the book before us, we think, when rightly understood, is that of reducing in any way the force of the old church doctrine of Original Sin. Most solemn stress is laid upon it practically in every part of the discussion. "There is a moral inability to keep God's law perfectly," we are told, "an inability born with us, and which we clearly see not to have belonged to man's nature originally, but to have been the *result of a deterioration*, which is called the Fall. This inability is in the infant; it develops itself in him just as soon as reason and responsibility begin to develop themselves. And the great end of remission, of forgiveness, of reconciliation, is the putting an end to this inability, *not in itself*, but in actual transgression, and in its own guiltiness. The fact of the inability, and of its origin, every one can see from his own nature.—The nature of Original Sin, the cause of this inability, we do not clearly know in this world, even our deepest imaginings cannot penetrate it. The very consideration of it is involved in the deepest mystery. It would seem that there is a hideousness and horror about it more fearful than we can imagine, when we think that for its remission and pardon the Eternal Word must take flesh, and be born, suffer, die, and be buried, that it should be remitted. It would seem, too, that if we could only comprehend it, sin is ultimately an *actual and real death*, of which the death of this world is only the shadow. It would seem also to be of the nature of an infection, reaching from generation to generation, and from father to son, extending as a disease, loathsome of itself in the eyes of God and Man. It would seem also as if it tainted the nature

of all men as unquestionably the infected nature of diseased animals, although undeveloped, still is in their offspring. It would appear also that there is some impenetrable and mysterious connection, as it were, between the souls of all men—between our souls and the souls of all our progenitors, and consequently with the souls of them in whom the deterioration took place.”
—P. 63, 64.

Again: “The inordinacy that comes from Original Sin, and inability to be obedient to the Law of God, run through *all parts* of man’s nature—‘the whole head is sick and the whole heart is faint’—and the Body is wounded as the Spiritual part is. But the one is not in its nature wholly or essentially evil any more than the other. The Body with its powers is in its nature good, but fallen, just as the whole man is; nay, there is not a function, or a desire, or appetite, or instinct of the Body, that is not in itself good, when it is guided and governed by the Law of God. This is the decision of the Ancient Church against the Manicheans, a decision worthy to be brought up again and again, and impressed and urged upon all men as one of the primal truths of a real Christian Science.”—Over and above the curse of natural death, the animal mind, or as others call it the understanding, that is the mental power as occupied with the things of sense, is found to be disabled. “And this, we can see, has taken place in a twofold way: the first by a superinduced imperfection in the action of its faculties; and the second, by an actual diminution of them in number.” In this last case the idea is, “that originally there were in man’s nature powers and faculties of body and mind which now he does not possess; and that these powers having been fully developed, and in full operation, in the Primal Man in his state of Original Righteousness, have, by means of the changed relation of man to all things in consequence of his sin, *skrunck back, as it were, into his being*, and been withered up, until hardly the vestiges and indications of them remain. So that with regard to man, we may say, in reference to those powers and capabilities that they *lie folded up in his being*, never coming to maturity of action or ripeness, as the germ of the fruit in buds that never come to flowers, or as the wings and plumage of the butterfly in the chrysalis, or as the ramifications of trunk and branch, twig and foliage, in the acorn of the oak.” This seems to be the case in reference to a multitude of powers, “whose existence and nature we can hardly guess at, save in the one way of analogical conjecture that they must have been of those that bound the external world in obedience to his commands. The being, nature, and extent of

these powers, what they are, or how, in what condition they would place man if *now* called forth, seems to be wrapped up in utter darkness; but that such have an actual existence as *possibilities*, it seems to me all things around us, by their analogies, lead us immediately to conclude."—P. 241-246.

The most jealous orthodoxy, we should think, can have no good reason to complain of the teaching of Mr. Adams, on the score of the article here in question, though he *does* take pains to show that man, in his fallen state, has not become either a fiend or a brute.

The second book is devoted to the consideration of *Conscience*, the first of the four governing powers in man's nature; the third to the *Spiritual Reason*; the fourth to the *Heart* or *Affections*; the fifth to the *Family* or *Home and its Affections*; the sixth to the *Human Will*. Under each of these heads we have several chapters of excellent thought, and a fund of rich practical observation well fitted to make the reader both wiser and better. The whole subject is handled at the same time in the way of life, rather than as a matter of speculation. It is made to carry with it the form of an earnest direct appeal continually to the experience of those who read. The general character and spirit of the work in this view may be learned from the following extract:

"There is one especial difficulty about Ethics, in that it is a science of which each one has the requisite knowledge *in his own consciousness*; and the presentation of it, then, in an external systematic form, is almost impossible. The business therefore of the writer, so far as he can, is to present the truths in such a manner, that each one may recognize them as facts of his own nature, and accede to the rules drawn forth by the author; but for putting it in a mechanically systematic order, it is a thing which the very nature of the science forbids. The true system in it is not of external arrangement, but of internal sequency, so that fact shall lead to fact, and principle be made a foundation-stone to principle: that so the reader shall be led to think upon his own nature, and to see by it that the principles of the science are true. For often it happens that a fact or truth shall be denied by him under the influence of prejudice or of ignorance, which had he seen it in its ethical connection with others of which he would make no doubt, though they have never been brought up consciously to his mind, he would at once have acknowledged to be true. Let not the reader then expect this external, mechanically systematic order from us; we are content if we present the various truths of Ethical Science in the peculiar systematic method which we have described above—

that form which we feel most appropriate to a science, all the facts of which are in existence in each one's breast."—P. 187.

The aim and scope of Mr. Adams' work are in the fullest sense churchly and christian. It does not propose however to be a direct exhibition of the idea of religion, as this springs from the grace of the Gospel. The author himself is careful to tell us, that Practical Christianity, as it is reached by human nature in covenant with God, forms a higher sphere of truth to which the discussion here presented must be taken as simply preliminary and introductory.

"The Ethics of a human being endued with this high privilege, placed in this lofty position, while manifestly it is *not opposite* to that of the man who is of nature only, not of grace—has only the capabilities instead of the gifts, but is the crowning and completion of it—is still something infinitely higher and infinitely more perfect. As the stately palm in the desert, crowned with its diadem of leaves at once, and flowers and fruit, is to the date borne in the hand of the wandering Arab, so is the true science of the Christian Life to the loftiest and truest philosophy of Nature apart from Grace. In both cases, it is true, the germ exists the same, but in the latter the influences are wanting that shall develop it. That germ in the case of the natural man, the spiritual nature that is in him existing, which renders him capable of grace, I have in this book treated of. Spiritual Ethics, the ethics of man in covenant with God, is a distinct and higher part of the same science, and is practical Christianity. At some future time, in the ripeness of maturer years and by the light of fuller knowledge, I may enter upon the examination of this loftier science."—P. 375, 376.

Here again the Reviewer before noticed affects to find a theological latitudinarianism. He will have it, that morality is a word of no meaning short of full Christianity. "Here in our judgment," he tells us, "is the grand mistake of the writer, which runs through his entire book. He has looked first upon human nature, its condition, character, susceptibilities and capabilities, in a *humanitarian* rather than a Christian aspect, and has based its moral training upon its natural capabilities, rather than upon its supernatural relation and assistances." Again: "Mr. Adams would have been truer to his title, had he at once thrown aside every thing like a mere human philosophy, and contemplated human nature, not in its original or fallen state merely, but also as redeemed, and brought henceforth into new relations, and under new and supernatural influences. In doing

this, he would we think have been guarded from positions, which seem to us erroneous and exceedingly unfortunate."—But this is to wrong egregiously both Mr. Adams and the subject of his book. It is not true, that he pretends to construct a science of man's moral nature on simply humanitarian ground, or that he has no regard to redemption as the necessary condition of morality and virtue in any complete form. On the contrary, his work is designed and well suited to shut men up to Christ, and to lead to him pedagogically, from beginning to end. It goes however on the assumption that Christ came, not to destroy, but to fulfil the sense which belongs to man's nature naturally considered; and that to understand this properly, is the surest way of seeing and feeling the necessity of that higher economy of supernatural grace and power, which is brought to light through him by the Church. Morality is not at once Religion, and still less Christianity; although it is perfectly true, that it can never complete itself except under this high form. Christianity does not bring into man his ethical nature, his moral necessities and capabilities, as though he were before a tree or a beast; it finds him with all this, and proves itself to be from God by meeting it with the power of a higher life, the complement of supernatural grace, whereby alone it can be redeemed from the law of sin and raised into true freedom. There is fair reason then, and full room, for such a study of Man ethically taken, as Mr. Adams here attempts, in the way of propædeutic discipline to the full science of Practical Christianity; and the censure which we have just quoted strikes us, accordingly, as altogether more nice than sound.

We close with a brief extract from the *Concluding Remarks* of the author, which may serve still farther to illustrate his somewhat quaint style, as well as the general aim and spirit of his work:

"I must now, in all justice to my reader, tell him that the system I have here laid before him is not a system of my own, invented by myself, but that it is the Ethical Science of the first Christians, as far as I have been able to distinguish and feel it. This I have, as it were, translated into the thought of our age and time, out of the thought of men of different ages and different times. That is, I have attempted to present, in a scientific form, as a *system*, before the ordinary reader, the Ethics of Christianity, as held by the Church unbroken, before the ambition of Rome and the pragmatical spirit of Constantinople had rent the Church in two. —If the reader who has gone thus far is contented with it, thinks

that it gives a sufficient and satisfactory account of Human Nature, its problems and their solution, in the first place I claim from him no praise, personally in this book. I profess to present the Ethics of the Ancient Church. Augustine, Athanasius, Cyril, Cyprian, Origen, Tertullian, these men whom every puny writer of the present day thinks himself privileged to scorn at—these are the sources from which I have obtained the principles here presented in a connected form; men who, often by the meditation of a whole life of holiness and self-denial, thought out and established forever the Christian solution of a single one of the problems of nature herein discussed. These results the theologian will often discern, in these pages, given in a few lines, while, in the original, volumes hardly embrace their discussion. For myself therefore I claim no praise of originality or genius; but that one of bringing again before the world, in a shape to every one tangible, the Ethical Science of Apostolic Christianity, undivided and at unity with itself.—So far with regard to myself I have said to him, who has thus far read the treatise with satisfaction; now, *with regard to himself*, I say, if he be convinced of the truth of these principles, let him not for a moment abide in a barren philosophy, but *act upon the principles* herein laid down. Let him begin to cultivate his Spiritual Inward Nature at all risks, and under all pain and loss to make it the ruling and supreme governor of his action.—The author has now come to the end of a laborious work, which he felt to be needed. He has worked upon it sincerely and ardently, for he knew of no book embracing the subjects treated upon herein, so as to be accessible to the mass of readers and at the same time pleasing to them. How he has succeeded time will tell; but if the reader feels that the author has so far succeeded as to supply, even in a small degree, the great want of a book upon these subjects, the author would ask of him *not to let the book rest upon his shelves*, but to bring it before the notice of those to whom it is likely to be of service.”

J. W. N.