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ARTICLE I.

THE REFORMATION IN ENGLAND.

History of the Reformation in the Sixteenth Century.
Volume Fifth. By J. H. MERLE D'AUBIGNE, D. D.

We have found the new volume of Dr. Merle to be even a more readable one than either of the preceding volumes. It contains some preliminary notices of the early British Church,—its “oriento-apostolical formation,”—its “national-papistical and royal-papistical corruption,”—the lingering of truth on the island of Iona,—the teaching of St. Patrick, of Columba, of Oswald, and of Aidan,—and the recognized equality of the office of Bishop and Presbyterian, in those earlier and purer times, which will doubtless be new and refreshing to many of the thousands of readers which the volume will attract. This volume only comes down to the death of Cardinal Wolsey, in the year 1530. It will be apt to suggest to many of its readers, who have also been readers of the former volumes of the series, a comparison between the Reformation in England, and the Reformation in Germany, France, Switzerland, and Scotland. How was it that the results in England differed from the results in all other countries? We make use of the occasion of the appearance of this volume, when the subject will be in many minds, to present the solution of this question, as it appears to us, without confining our view to the small

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if he does not consciously believe, to do what is practically more ruinous, to feel half consciously, that the minister is not in earnest; that his preaching is not really prompted by a settled belief of the sinner's ruin and the Redeemer's love; but by the desire to further his own reputation and earn his bread. For, is not this parade of self-display just in character with such a purpose? And when the lover of sin and godlessness thus feels that the appointed ambassador of eternity does not himself believe, of course he will allow himself to doubt.—Let this, then, be the great and final objection to all artifice of manner in the pulpit, that it most surely sows broadcast the seeds of skepticism.

And, in truth, dear Brethren, does not our proneness to such manner,—does not the fact that we can be capable of it, proceed from the weakness of our faith? The true cure of the vice is to feel the powers of the world to come. The reason that Davies, Tennent and Whitefield, Paul and Peter, and above all, He that spoke as never man spake, displayed such directness and power, was that their souls saw heaven and hell with the vision of faith. The more we can feel the love of Christ, and the nearer we can draw to the cross, the judgment, and the eternal world, the more we shall feel that all else than native simplicity and directness is out of place, and that all else is unnecessary.

ARTICLE VI.

THE PROVINCE OF REASON, ESPECIALLY IN MATTERS OF RELIGION.

1 *Thess. V*: 21.—1 *Peter, III*: 15.—*Matthew, VI*: 23.
Luke, XI: 34.—*Rom. I*: 22.

In the first of these passages of Scripture, we are taught not to receive *implicitly* as the true doctrines of God, what may be inculcated even by the ministers of God. We are to listen to them with reverence, but not with

unthinking acquiescence. We are, ourselves, to search the Scriptures, to become familiar with their truths; and having thus proved that what is taught is scriptural, and therefore true, we are to hold it fast as "good," to lay it up in our hearts, and to practise it in our lives. In accordance with this general precept, our Saviour, on more than one occasion, called upon his hearers to judge,—not of the truth or reasonableness of what he taught,—(for how *could* they believe in heavenly things whose nature transcended their finite capacities.)—but to judge of the evidences which he gave, that He was an infallible teacher, and that all, therefore, that he said, was indubitable truth.* The Apostles, also, in enforcing any duty, do not hesitate to appeal to the reason and conscience of men, and to characterize the whole of piety, both as it is "the obedience of faith," and as it is the obedience of the life, a "reasonable service."†

In the second passage we have quoted, Christians are exhorted, in view of the opposition and hatred to which they and their holy religion are exposed, to see that their knowledge of God is an experimental, saving and sanctifying knowledge, that they may be ever ready to give to every one that asketh it, a reason of the glorious hope that is in them, both as it regards the irresistible strength of the external evidences of the gospel, and of the unspeakable peace and power of its internal working to the salvation of all who believe.

In the third passage, our Saviour compares the reason of man to the eye. If the eye is prevented from a clear and perfect vision by any film or impediment, or by want of sufficient light, then, just as surely as we attempt to use it, will it mislead and injure us. But, if the eye be in itself sound, and the light by which it sees be pure, then will its perceptions be correct, and our steps well ordered. In like manner, reason may be vitiated,—or its present light may be obscure,—or it may be wholly incapable of judging of the truth before it, by reason of its spiritual and supernatural grandeur; and if, in such circumstances, it is made the judge and standard of truth,

* John v: 31; and x: 37, 38; and xxi: 25. 1 John, iv: 1.

† 1 Cor. x: 15. Rom. xii: 1.

it will, and must, lead us into error. But, when reason is in itself perfect, and the evidence before it is sufficient and capable of being fully appreciated and understood, then it will lead us to right and proper conclusions, both as to truth and duty.

In the last passage quoted, we are informed that such is the present *vitiating* and *perverting* state of human reason, that even those who have made the most pompous professions of their love of wisdom, and have claimed to be wise above all others, have proved themselves to be vain and foolish,—have darkened their own hearts, and the hearts of others,—have obscured the knowledge of God, and of duty, preserved to them by primitive traditional revelation,—and, not liking to retain this knowledge of God, have been involved in inextricable doubts and difficulties, both as it regards God and the chief good, and everlasting life. “Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that was in them, because of the blindness of their hearts.”

We are thus brought to the subject of the present discourse, namely, the province of reason in matters of religion. It has been asserted, and is still maintained, *theoretically* by Deists, and Unitarians, and by thousands *practically*, that reason is a sufficient, and the only necessary guide in matters of religion, and that revelation is either unnecessary and useless, and therefore untrue, or that, being to some extent, and for some purposes, necessary, reason is the standard by which its doctrines and its duties are to be judged. “Whatever opinion agrees not with reason, (says Smalcius, one of the fathers of modern Unitarianism,) is inadmissible in theology, and to admit such doctrines, we neither can, nor ought to, be induced, even by the express words of the Spirit of God himself.”* According to Dr. Beard, one of the most recent and very learned defenders of Unitarianism,† “The fundamental peculiarity of the anti-trinitarian movement is the deference paid to human intelligence as

* See his words quoted at length in Smith's Testimony to the Messiah, vol. i., pp. 75, 76.

† Historical and Artistical Illustrations of the Trinity, by J. R. Beard, D. D. London. 1846: p. 198.

the *judge*, though not the *source* of religious truth." The same author says,* "As *witnesses*, the Apostles and primitive Christians are invaluable; as *authorities*, they are revolutionary." "We may be excused, (he continues,) if we think that these expounders of Christianity did not always rigidly adhere to its sole and perfect type, as found in the mind of the Lord Jesus himself."† He also adds, "Let it not be supposed that, therefore, the writer holds every part of Scripture to be of equal authority. Such an idea is a gross and pernicious error. All Scripture is in some way profitable, but all is not alike valid."

Similar affirmations we might adduce from various acknowledged writers of this denomination of "rational believers," as they proudly call themselves. But this is needless, as it has been affirmed among ourselves that "the religious element in man received a new stimulus and direction at the coming of the Son of Man, and the promulgation of his holy religion. Yet its chief and most potent manifestations are still characterized by much that is arbitrary, wayward, contradictory and inconsistent."—"God, in the mean time," it is added, "gives us REASON to examine, to defend, to CORRECT, to IMPROVE, or to FORSAKE these accompanying errors." *Reason*, therefore, and not any written revelation, it is affirmed, is the source, or at least the arbiter and judge of religious truth. Is it so? This question, it may be perceived, lies at the foundation of all inquiries into religious doctrine, and determines at once, whether God, in His WORD, or REASON in EACH INDIVIDUAL HEART, is to be the standard and judge of religious truth.

To come to a proper conclusion on this subject, we must, in the first place, understand what reason is, and secondly, what are its capacity, limits, and present condition, and this will at once point out its province in matters of religion.

What, then, is reason? Reason, derived from the Latin verb to think, is the power or faculty of thinking.—"It is (says Locke,) that faculty in man whereby he is supposed to be distinguished from the beasts, and wherein it is evident he much surpasses them." "It denotes

* Hist. and Art. Illust. of the Trinity, p. 7. _ _ † Ditto, p. 7.

that power by which we distinguish truth from falsehood, and right from wrong, and by which we are enabled to combine means for the attainment of particular ends," and "to deduce (adds Webster,) inferences from facts or propositions." "Reason (says Isaac Taylor,) is the mind acting upon its own ideas."* "It is distinguished from instinct by the knowledge of relations,—or cause and effect."† To have reason is, therefore, to be a rational, moral, and accountable being, that is, to be a man. But while all men are thus *rational*, it must be remembered that he only is *reasonable* who acts according to the principles of right reason.

Reason, then, is that sublime spiritual or intellectual nature, by which man is enabled to know truth, and to obey it,—to examine the validity of the testimony brought before it,—to separate the false from the true,—give assent according to the evidence, and thus arrive at the certainty of *knowledge* when the evidence for truth is unexceptionable,—at *probability* when the evidence for the truth outweighs objections or difficulties,—and at *conviction of falsehood* when there is a plain and positive disagreement.

To receive nothing as truth but what is thus made certain by sufficient evidence, to judge and act only upon such rational grounds, to believe and do nothing but what he is convinced by the proper use of his reason, and the full, candid and impartial examination of evidence, he ought to believe and to do, is to act as a *rational* being, and to be, in fact, a *reasonable* being.

Man is commonly spoken of as made up of distinct and separate faculties, each independent in its power of action from the rest. But while such a division may be necessary and important for general purposes, it is most delusive, regarded as any thing more than an abstract classification of the various exercises, attributes, faculties and powers,—call them what we may,—of THE ONE rational mind. With a capacity to discern relations, causes, and effects, to deduce conclusions, to act from mo-

* See Elements of Thought, by Isaac Taylor, p. 134, and Brown's Philosophy, p. 313, 1 vol. ed.

† Ditto p. 102.

tives drawn from the past, the present, and the future, and to arrive at convictions of the existence and reality of invisible, spiritual and everlasting things,—this REASON or MIND of man, is just that intelligent, moral and accountable nature which God has given him. And, although common language ascribes a variety of faculties to the soul, imputing one action to the blindness of passion, another to the evil of our tempers, another to the heat of imagination, and another to the calmness of our reason, yet, in reality, THE SOUL IS ONE, and every thing that is done, is done by man under the active and controlling power of this rational and responsible nature.—The body, with its animal spirits, desires, and propensities, and its nervous and physical energy, is made to be subject to the soul, to be its servant and helper, to cooperate in the furtherance of every good word and work, and to be restrained from every thing that is evil in thought, word and deed. The body, except for the preservation of animal life, cannot act except as it is acted upon. Passion is *passive* until it receives power from the will, and permission from the reason. Emotions can only *suggest*, they can not *determine* our conduct. The impulses of our nature can only be gratified when the soul, the mind, the reason of the intelligent man concurs in allowing their indulgence, and in securing the means necessary for it. They are intended to be as absolutely under the controul of reason as are the hand, the feet, the eyes, and the other senses.

It is on this account that man is capable of vice and virtue, morality and immorality, purity and impurity, sin and holiness. *He* possesses, and the *brutes* do not, a knowledge of God, of God's law, God's will, and of his own duty, and of all that is required and prohibited under the penalty of God's wrath and curse. But all this knowledge man possesses by his reason, which is, we have seen, that intelligent nature which distinguishes him *from* the brutes. The same actions which in brutes have no moral character, in man become morally right or wrong. It follows, therefore, that since the actions of men are only regarded as right or wrong, blamable or commendable, when they proceed from one who is considered to be in the full possession of his reason,—that

every thing that is imprudence, baseness, villany or sin, in man, however it may require the co-operation of the body, must be the act of his rational nature, otherwise it would have no moral character whatever.

I do not mean to condemn the language which speaks of the several faculties and passions of the soul as if they were as distinct and independent as the governor, officers and citizens of a commonwealth. These distinctions are necessary for mental analysis and general comprehension,—give life and beauty to all language and discourses,—and indicate the particular motive and medium by which, in every action, the intelligent nature of man is induced to judge and to act as it does.

Considered, however, in this light,—that is, as a faculty of thinking and judging,—reason has no moral character. It is neither good nor evil, proud nor humble, presumptuous nor vain. It is merely a faculty or power, and only becomes moral when regarded as under the direction of the intelligent moral nature of man, actuated by motives, arriving at certain ends, subject to the moral law of God, and guided by certain principles. Morally speaking, reason is just what man is. Man is under authority to God's *law* as the rule of duty,—to God's *will* as the supreme and final judge,—to God's *testimony*,—in whatever way imparted,—as the ultimate, final, and infallible evidence of what is true or false, good or evil.—Reason, therefore, becomes morally good or evil, holy or unholy, humble or proud, presumptuous or vain, just as it is employed in faithfully ascertaining God's law, God's testimony, and God's will, and in implicitly obeying them,—or, on the other hand, as it follows the desires and devices of a wicked heart, and under its influences will not come to the light, lest its deeds should be re-proved.

We proceed to remark that this rational nature, and of course this faculty or power of judging, is limited.—All men, in distinction from the brutes, are by nature intelligent and rational beings, by *which*, and not by *instinct*, they discover what is right or wrong, good and evil.

Not that all men are alike in their intellectual, any more than in their physical, nature. There is, in both

respects, perfect individuality and endless variety, and yet, at the same time, one and the same general nature.

This intelligent and rational nature of man, however exalted it may be in its highest manifestations, it is nevertheless inferior to that of *angels*, both in its capacity of thought, and in the extent of its knowledge, and it is infinitely inferior to the reason and knowledge of *God*. Man is endowed with that degree of reason, and that capacity of knowledge, which was proper and necessary for his condition here and hereafter. His glory, therefore, must be to act in accordance with the order and perfection of his being. And to sink *below* it, and prostitute his powers to earthly, sensual, or devilish pursuits,—or, on the other hand, to attempt to *exceed* the powers bestowed upon him,—is equally irrational and sinful. The one is self-destruction, the other presumption, folly and rebellion. There is a line which no created understanding can pass, and that line is fixed to every class of beings according to their own order, even as there is one glory of the sun, and another of the moon, and another of the stars.

And, as there are doubtless many beings superior to ourselves, who are able to discover more truths than we can do, so it is reserved for 'God alone, to have a perfect and universal comprehension of all possible truths.

“When, therefore, reason refuses to submit to God’s guidance, or assent to what has all the inward and external marks of God’s infallible testimony;—when it will deny, only because it cannot comprehend and fathom the depths of God with its own short line,—or, when it attempts to give reasons, and account for things which God has not thought fitting to explain,—then it transgresses the bound of duty, and, instead of a guide, becomes a deceiver and destroyer of those who follow its directions.” It is the light of a candle employed to discover that which is irradiated by the light of the sun. It is arrogant profaneness, a wanton encroachment upon the prerogatives of Heaven, and an impious challenge to our Maker, why he has made us as he has. Reason, in such a case, is the *ignis fatuus* which leads its bewildering follower into fatal paths; or, it is like the lightning

flash to the lost traveller, which only discovers the immensity of the trackless waste before him.

But further, human reason is as certainly limited in its *field of observation*, as in its capacity to judge. We inhabit but a spot in the creation of God. By our connection with the body, and the subjection of our reason to the senses as the inlets of all our original perceptions, the mind cannot go beyond the conclusions drawn from what it is capable of observing.

Reason, in its popular acceptance, is nothing but a faculty. It is not knowledge, but only the capacity or power of obtaining it. When observation, instruction and education are denied, this power lies dormant.—When that observation and instruction are erroneous, reason only confirms us in ignorance and error. Reason, in and of itself, is therefore insufficient to discover and practise what is necessary for the ordinary duties even of the present life.

As our Saviour has taught us, reason or understanding is, spiritually, what the eye is physically. The one is capable of seeing, and the other of knowing. But the eye cannot see without light, nor reason without instruction. Reason is not the light, but the organ which acts by the light imparted to it. Even in reference to the world around it, reason knows infinitely less than it is ignorant of; and the little it does know, is known as the result of close observation, diligent study, and ages of experience and discovery.

The relations and dependencies of the system of our globe, not to speak of our planetary system, and that of the visible universe, are almost entirely beyond our observation and knowledge. So are all the essences of things. How much more certainly and necessarily, therefore, must this be the case, in reference to every thing that is beyond the visible world,—all that is invisible and incapable of observation,—all that is supernatural and infinitely removed from the sphere and capacity of our finite and limited reason.

Whatever we can know by the use of our faculties of *observation and understanding*, is properly within the bounds of reason. Whatever objects are *beyond these*, must either remain unknown, or become known only by

clear and sufficient testimony, in which case they reasonably claim and secure the approbation of our reason. In reference to such objects, the testimony must be supernatural, and the evidence must be Divine, in order to be infallible. Reason perceives the truth and certainty of the testimony, in whatever way it is revealed, just as it perceives God's testimony to what is true in all the phenomena of nature,—and knowing that God will not deceive and cannot lie, it regards the evidence as infallible, and arrives at a most rational assurance of the truth.—This is FAITH, that is, knowledge founded, not upon observation or intuition, but upon testimony.

The things which are objects of this knowledge, that is, which are above and beyond reason, were by the ancients included under that part of knowledge termed *metaphysical*, that is, after or above what is physical.

“In this class, Plato ranges the contemplation of all Divine things; such as, the first being or cause,—the origin of things,—the wonders of providence,—the worship of God,—the mysteries of religion,—the immortality of the soul,—and a future state. He never pretended one of these to be discoverable by reason, but always ingenuously confesses them to be learned by traditions brought from the Barbarians, viz: the Jews, &c. They were frequently termed wonderful things, as being neither discoverable nor demonstrable by reason.”

Such is the nature and limits of human reason, considered apart from any moral obliquity that may attach to it,—clear, and upright, and ever ready to approve and follow that which is good. But such is not its present character. Man was, indeed, “made upright,” but he has become “corrupt.” As men are now, “they have no understanding.” They have “corrupt minds.” Their “foolish heart is darkened.” “Having the understanding darkened through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart.” Man's reason, therefore, is now clouded as well as limited. It is debased by servitude to the lusts of the flesh and the lusts of the eyes. It is enfeebled by moral disease. It is manacled by prejudices. The eye of reason is vitiated. It cannot bear the light. It loveth darkness rather than light, and because it will not come to the light and re-

ceive the truth in the love of it, it stumbleth, even at noon-day. Such is the testimony of "the Father of our spirits."—"the Light who enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world," and who "knoweth what is in man."

And such, also, is the testimony of observation and experience. Even in reference to purely intellectual and philosophical pursuits, the father of philosophy found it necessary to caution against the idols of the mind. The art of reasoning is but the science of exposing and guarding against the weakness, perversity and sophistry of the human mind. Imperfection, contradiction, change have characterized all the efforts of genius. No theory has been too absurd to find advocates and disciples, while rival sects,—from those who believe every thing, to those who believe nothing, however true,—have filled up the history of philosophy. There is no single truth, from the existence of an external world to the existence of an eternal God, which has not been denied and darkened. Reason has, in all ages, rendered man shamefully unreasonable. Philosophy has been the guide to all the errors under the sun. What right reason itself is,—what the chief good is,—what right and wrong are,—what is the nature, ground, and authority of morality,—what man is,—what the soul is,—what God is,—what man's destiny is,—human reason never has discovered or determined, with any fixed or authoritative certainty. There have been as many opinions as philosophers in the world, and among them, there have been *opinions* merely, but no *certain knowledge*. When in the right, they disputed themselves wrong, and left every thing in confusion and doubt. Socrates, the wisest of men, professed to know only one thing with certainty, and that was his ignorance of every thing, and the ignorance of all who pretended to know any more. Plato, again and again, reminded his hearers that he could give them probability, and not proof, for what he taught. Both Socrates and Plato rebuked the pride and ignorance of philosophers as the fruitful source of every error.* Aristotle condemned all

* Plato brings in Socrates in his *Alcibiades*, thus philosophizing: "Thou knowest that errors in practice come from this ignorance, that men think

his predecessors as foolish and vain-glorious, and in regard to all things Divine, *said* little, and *believed* less. And, not to name the skeptics who doubted and disputed every thing, the opinion of Tully may be given as that of all who have ever earnestly inquired after truth, without the light of revelation, namely, "that all things are surrounded and concealed by so thick a darkness, that no strength of mind can penetrate them."*

they know, what they do not." Then he adds, When men are conscious of their own ignorance, they are willing to be taught by others. Again, Believe me and the famous Delphic oracle, Know thyself. This Plato, in his Charmides, speaks, Many have erred from their scope by trusting to their own opinion without judgment. Again, It is a great piece of temperance for a man to know himself. It would be a great advantage if none would act beyond their knowledge and strength. We seem to know all things, but indeed we are ignorant of every thing. It is an absurd thing to philosophize of things we know not; when any attempts a thing above his strength, he greatly errs. Thus Plato, out of what he had learnt from his master, Socrates. So, again, in his Legib. 5, Plato discoursing of self-love: From this, says he, proceeds this great error, that all men esteem their ignorance to be wisdom, whence, knowing nothing, we think we know all things. Thence, not permitting ourselves to be taught what we are ignorant of, we fall into great errors. We have, indeed, a great saying in his Epinom. p. 980, shewing that we can get no true knowledge of God, but by dependence on, and prayer to him. His words are, Trusting in the Gods, pray unto them, that thou mayest have right notions of the Gods. Thus it shall be, if God as a Guide, shall shew us the way; only help thou with thy prayers.

Lastly, Plato, Legib. 4, tells us, That he who is humble and modest will adhere to Divine justice. But he that is lifted up in his own proud confidences, as though he wanted no Guide or Governor, he is deserted by God; and being deserted, disturbs others; and, although he may for awhile seem some body, yet at last he is sufficiently punished by Divine justice.— See the original, given in Gale's Court of the Gentiles, vol. 3., pp. 15, 16.

* The early fathers who had been disciples of Plato, and the other philosophers, speak very strongly of their weakness and folly.

You will adduce, says Justin Martyr to the Greeks, the wise men and the philosophers, for, to these, as to a strong-hold, you are wont to make your escape, whenever, concerning the Gods, any one twits you with the opinion of the poets. Wherefore, since it is fitting to begin with the first and the most ancient, commencing with them I will shew: that the speculation of each philosopher is still more ridiculous, than even the theology of the poets. (1)

He then proceeds in regular succession, through the several opinions of Thales, Anaximander, Anaximenes, Heraclitus, Anaxagoras, Archelaus, Pythagoras, Epicurus, Empedocles, Plato, and Aristotle, for the purpose of convicting them all of manifest and indisputable folly. With respect to *Plato*, in particular, nothing can be more contemptuous than Justin's sneer at him.

(1) Justin ad Græc. Cohort. Oper. p. 3.

But man was made to *practise* as well as to *know*; and *reason* was intended to guide into right *actions* as well as into right *opinions*. To know and choose to do what is good is moral goodness, and to know and choose to do what is contrary to right, is moral evil. What, then, is the character of human reason, as seen in human conduct? All that we commonly call the weakness, blindness and disorder of our passions, is, in reality, the weakness, disorder and blindness of our reason, to whom those passions are in subjection, and without whose sanction they could neither desire, will, nor act. All the tempers

Plato, forsooth, is as sure that the Supreme Deity exists in a fiery substance, as if he had come down from above, and had accurately learned and seen all the things that are in Heaven. (1)

Since, continues he to the Greeks, it is impossible to learn from your teachers any thing true respecting piety towards God, inasmuch as their very difference of opinion is a plain proof of their ignorance; I deem it an obvious consequence, that we should return to our own forefathers; who are of much higher antiquity than any of your teachers; who have taught us nothing from their own mere phantasy; who, among themselves, have no discrepancies; and who attempt not mutually to the opinion of each other, but who, without wrangling and disputation, communicate to us that knowledge which they have received from God. For, neither by nature nor by human intellect, is it possible for men to attain the knowledge of such great and Divine matters; but only by the gift which descends from above upon holy men, who needed not the arts of eloquence or the faculty of subtle disputation, but who judged it solely necessary to preserve themselves pure for the efficacious energy of the Divine Spirit.

For the authors of our theology, says he, we have the Apostles of the Lord: who not even themselves arbitrarily chose what they would introduce; but who faithfully delivered to the nations that discipline which they had received from Christ. FINALLY HERESIES THEMSELVES ARE SUBORNED FROM PHILOSOPHY. Thence spring those fables and endless genealogies and unfruitful questions and discourses, creeping like a gangrene: from which the Apostles would rein us back, by charging us, even in so many words, to beware of philosophy. What, then, is there in common between Athens and Jerusalem, between the Academy and the Church, between Heretics and Christians? Our institution is from the porch of Solomon: who himself has admonished us to seek the Lord in simplicity of heart. Let those persons see to it, who have brought forward a Stoical, or a PLATONIC, or a Dialectic Christianity.

From the Prophets and from Christ we are instructed in regard to God. Not from the Philosophers or from Epicurus.

God hath chosen the foolish things of the world that he might confound the wise. Through this simplicity of the truth, DIRECTLY CONTRARY to subtilequence and philosophy, we can savour nothing perverse. (2)

(1) Justin. Cohort. Oper., p. 4.

(2) See also Tertullian to the same same effect, adv. hæc. § 2, 3; and adv. Marcion lib. ii., § 13, and lib. v. § 40.

and passions of the heart, all the prejudices and idols of the mind, all the numerous faculties of the soul, are, as we have said, but the various acts and operations of one and the same rational principle which, in its union with the physical nature, constitutes man, and they only receive different names, according to the object on which this reason is employed, and the manner in which it acts. Reason, therefore, as it is the only principle of virtue, so it is the only cause of all that is base, horrid and shameful in human nature. Reason alone can discern truth, and reason alone can lead into the grossest errors, both in speculation and in practice, and hence men are held accountable for all the evil they do, because they do it knowingly, and willingly, that is, in the exercise of reason.

Such, then, as is human nature, such is human reason. And as human nature is every where, and in all ages and places mistrusted, deceitful, and desperately wicked in its unrestrained developments, it follows that though all men *are rational*, they are not *reasonable*; since reason itself is darkened by sin, "so that the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, either as to doctrine, spirit or duty, for they are foolishness unto him, because they are spiritually discerned."

Reason, in man's present condition, is not what it originally was. That light, therefore, which at first was sufficient to preserve man from falling, and to lead him in the way of truth, is not sufficient to restore him, now that he has fallen, and to bring him back to God. "Not (says the Apostle,) that we are sufficient of ourselves, to think anything as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God," who alone can "give us an understanding that we may know Him that is true, and be guided into all truth, and be preserved from all error."

This brings us once more, therefore, to the main question before us, namely, whether reason,—the reason of every individual man, or the collective reason of all men, or the particular opinions each man has happened to take up, with or without examination,—whether this reason is the standard and judge of truth. It is not a question now in dispute, whether all men have the *right* and are under a solemn *obligation*, to judge and act accord-

ing to their own reason. This is as clear to our mind as that every man has a right to see, and can see only with his own eyes, and hear with his own ears. This is a matter of duty and of necessity, since man, as a rational being, can only act from reason, and can only really believe what his own reason has assured him is proved by sufficient evidence. To act from the principle of reason and choice, or will, is as necessary to man as his being what he is. This is not the privilege of the philosopher, but is as essential to human nature as self-consciousness, personal identity and conscience are.

In this controversy, we maintain, therefore, the absolute necessity of reason to every opinion which man holds, and to every action man performs. This we do against fanatics on the one hand, and Romanists on the other. Both these classes of errorists agree in denying the use of reason. The fanatic "substitutes in place of the sober deductions of reason, the extravagant fancies of a disordered imagination, and considers these fancies as the immediate illumination of the Spirit of God." He puts out the light, and then follows the vagaries of his own bewildered imagination, forgetting that God never commands, but he convinces also; that men cannot obey without believing, nor believe without sufficient evidence of the truth or duty. They who deny, therefore, the use of reason, in order to the belief of any doctrine or duty, destroy the only means God has given us to convince of the reasonableness and obligation of truth and duty, and instead of a rational worship, have fallen into all the delusions of madness and superstition.

The Romanist allows religion to be a reasonable service only so far as it enables the enquirer to discover that the Romish Church is the infallible testifier, in God's stead, to all that is truth, and to all that is duty. Having done this, its office ceases, except so far as to hear what she inculcates, and obey what she commands. In other words, man, in becoming a Romanist, ceases to be a rational being, and to hold any direct relation or responsibility to God. He believes and does what the church enforces, and this is the sum and substance of the Romish religion. It is not belief in God, in Christ, in a Holy Spirit, or in any one or all of the doctrines of the

Gospel. It is belief in the Church of Rome, not in the Bible, not in our own senses, reason, or faculties. This, however, is as contrary to the necessity of our being, as it is to the word of God, which requires us to search the Scriptures, whether what the church teaches be true, to prove all her teachings by that word, and to be always ready, in reference to every doctrine and duty, to give a reason to every one that asketh.

The question, then, now before us, is not as to the use of reason, in reference to all testimony, and all evidence, and its absolute necessity to all belief, but whether every man's reason is to guide him in his inquiries after truth, and in his reception of the truth by its own light *merely*, by the amount of its present knowledge *merely*, or by that it conceives to be the general opinion of mankind *merely*, or whether in all matters that relate to God and things spiritual and divine, it is to be guided by the light which God has been pleased to impart in his word.

Here we encounter the *abuse* of reason, and contend against Deists, Rationalists and Unitarians, for the insufficiency of reason, as a guide or judge in matters of religion,—for its true nature, office and function,—and for the necessity, both of the Divind Word, and the Divine Spirit, as a standard, and as a guide to truth. And from what we have said, this controversy may, we think, be summarily ended.

Reason, we have seen, is finite, limited, and imperfect, and in reference to all Spiritual and Divine things, weakened and darkened. Reason, too, is only a faculty, a capacity of knowledge. It is not knowledge. Whatever man knows, he knows by observation, experience, instruction, through the processes of his own reason, his intuitive beliefs, his original suggestions, his sense of right and wrong, with all other attributes and powers which together constitute his reason, and make him an intelligent, moral and accountable being. Now, what the reason of a child is, compared with the reason of an educated man, the reason of the most highly gifted and informed mind is to that of angels; and the reason and knowledge of angels is no more than a single ray of light compared to the noontide brilliance of the sun, when contrasted with the infinite reason and perfect compre-

hension of Him that knoweth all things past, present and future,—whether material or immaterial, natural or divine. And since it is the very nature and irresistible tendency of reason to obtain whatever assistance, guidance and instruction, it has the means and opportunity of securing, in order to develop its powers and enlarge its sphere of knowledge;—since, without such light and guidance, it would know nothing, even of things on earth, it is at once evident that human reason only acts rationally when in reference to all things divine, and which are, by their very nature, beyond its observation and comprehension, it submits itself implicitly to the teaching and guidance of revelation. Revelation, that is, the testimony and instruction of God, in reference to the nature of things *spiritual*, supernatural, and divine, is to reason just what nature, observation and instruction, the testimony provided by God, is in reference to things *natural*. Deists, and Rationalists, and Unitarians, might just as reasonably reject all use of these means of obtaining and judging of the truth and certainty and real nature of *natural* things, as to reject the light and guidance of revelation in things supernatural. God can give his testimony as to what is true in regard to things divine by revelation, as well as give it as to things natural by his works, and by the senses, faculties, observation and experience of men. And it is the same exercise of reason when it employs itself in finding out what God's testimony *is*, and believing what God testifies to be *true*, in regard to what God makes known by revelation, and what he makes known by observation, experience and argument. Christians, therefore, no more submit their reason to authority and to subjection, in receiving implicitly as true, without comprehending it, what God testifies in his word, than in receiving implicitly what God testifies in his works. In both cases, God's testimony is the ground of our belief.—In both cases, we rely upon the infallibility of those powers of knowing that it is his testimony which God, who will not, and cannot deceive, has given us.—In both cases we gladly avail ourselves of all the light and knowledge God is pleased to impart to us.—In both cases, we comprehend nothing at all of the real essence of things, but only what God is pleased to mani-

fest concerning them.—And in both cases, when we ascertain with certainty what God has *made*, what God has *done*, and what God has said, we ascertain what is the truth, and all that we can know of the truth. Reason, therefore, has precisely the same office, and the same province, in regard to all truth. The only difference is in regard to the nature of the evidence by which truth is testified, and thus brought before it. In things natural, the *testimony* is found in nature, and the *evidence* of what that nature in *fact is*, is brought before it by the observation of the senses, by the perceptions of the mind, by education and information, conveying to it upon testimony the experience of others. It is in this way reason acts, and acquires all it knows, all it can know, of natural things. On the other hand, in things supernatural, that is, in things beyond the reach of our senses, this *testimony* is found in the revelation of God, and what God *does* reveal, is brought before the mind by the evidence of prophecy, of miracles, and all the other external, internal, and experimental evidences by which what *claims* to be God's word, is *proved* to be indeed such.—By education and instruction, the mind becomes acquainted with these evidences. By its intuitions and inferences, the mind is led to the conviction of the truth and inspiration of the Bible. And being thus assured that *all* Scripture is given by inspiration, and was written by holy men of God as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, reason receives what the Bible contains as infallible truth, although, of necessity, all that it reveals is above its comprehension, and can only be known so far as it has pleased God to reveal it. For reason to judge of the *truth* of doctrines thus certainly revealed, is as absurd and irrational, as for reason to judge of the *truth* of the facts revealed in nature. All that reason can do in either case is to ascertain what *are facts*, and then to believe in them, however incomprehensible, and however apparently contrary to other facts, and to its own preconceived opinions, they may be, and in point of fact are, in regard to much of our natural knowledge.—Reason is unreasonable whenever it attempts more than this, since to refuse to believe on sufficient evidence what is incomprehensible or contrary to preconceived opinions,

is a direct violation of all reason. The truth and comprehension of a fact in nature, or of a doctrine in revelation, is not the province of reason, but only the ascertaining of the testimony and the determination of the evidence by which they are proved to be facts in nature or doctrines of revelation.

Let us, then, learn the true nature and condition of man. Let us be humble. Reason is exalted when it is abased, when it is teachable, conscious of its weakness, imperfection and liability to mistakes. The greatest minds have been the humblest, and the most extensive knowledge has ever been the result of the most docile and patient research. And what we object to in Deists and Rationalistic Christians is, not that they *reason*, but that they reason *ill*,—not that they claim a right to form and to hold fast their *own* opinions, but that they claim the right to hold *wrong* opinions, which is self-contradictory,—not that they thus investigate by reason the evidence of what is true, but that they attempt, by the finite line of reason, to fathom the depth of what is infinitely *below*, to measure the height of what is infinitely *above*, and to comprehend the nature of what is infinitely *beyond* their reason.

“Matters of pure revelation are immediately from the instruction of God, therefore most reasonable to be believed, because most certainly true; but cannot be believed, otherwise than He has proposed them, either in manner or degree. From the insufficiency of reason to guide us in all matters relating to our final good, appears the necessity of revelation against the cavils of those who would so exalt nature as to render it altogether needless. And the evidence of its coming from God, manifests the obligation we are under to receive and obey it, against the atheistical objections of those who would” attempt by reason to judge, to comprehend and to reject it, “represent it as a superstitious contrivance or invention of men. When, therefore, reason refuses to submit to God’s guidance, or assent to what has all the inward and external marks of truth and infallible testimony; when it will deny, only because it cannot comprehend and fathom the depths of God with its own short line; or attempts to give reasons, and accounts for things which God has

not thought fitting to explain; then it transgresses the bounds of duty, and instead of a guide becomes a deceiver and destroyer of those who follow its directions."

"It is this arrogance, self-sufficiency, and exalting reason to an independency upon God, that has been the source of all fatal error and impiety, and tempted men to revolt from religion and from God. Such oracles of vain reasoning have all the doubters and disputers against religion been, since the world began. The more men have depended upon reason for the measure of Divine things, the further always have they erred from the truth. And what this is owing to, we may learn from the confessions of a noble author, Lord Shaftesbury, in the first class among the despisers of revelation. "There is (says he) a certain perverse humanity in us, which inwardly resists the Divine commission, though ever so plainly revealed."

ARTICLE VII.

CRITICAL NOTICES.

1. *Discoveries among the Ruins of Nineveh and Babylon, with Travels in Armenia, Kurdistan and the Desert: being the result of a second Expedition undertaken for the Trustees of the British Museum.* By AUSTEN H. LAYARD, M. P., *Author of Nineveh and its Remains.* New York: G. P. Putnam & Co. 1853. pp. 664, 8 vo.

Those who have enjoyed the pleasure of reading the two former volumes containing Mr. Layard's researches amid the ruins of Nineveh, will require little persuasion to open these records of his second expedition. As a traveller, Mr. Layard conducts his readers over a tract of country possessing all the interest which the most ancient historical associations can impart. The peculiarities of Eastern scenery are gracefully depicted, whilst the usages of a people of patriarchal simplicity lend a freshness to his narrative