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ART. I.—CHARACTER AND WRITINGS OF DR. MASON.

The writings of the late John M. Mason, D. D. Consisting of sermons, essays, and miscellanies, including essays already published in the Christian's Magazine. In 4 volumes. Selected and arranged by Rev. Ebenezer Mason.

It is the ordinance of heaven, that no man greatly distinguished for his talents and virtues should die, without leaving an important legacy to the world—the *legacy of his own character*. This is designed by Providence to be in the place of his living example and active efforts; to plead the cause of virtue after the eloquent tongue has been palsied by death, and to stimulate to noble enterprises on earth, when the spirit has entered on a higher sphere of action in heaven. Each generation therefore is bound to preserve some substantial record of its truly illustrious men;—such as while living have contributed most under God to form its character. Men of this stamp will indeed do much even without the aid of such a record, to guide the destinies of posterity; because such is the power of great talents, and such the connection of moral actions with each other, that from the life of every man of distinguished greatness and excellence, there is a tide of influence sent forth which must force its way through every obstacle down the tract of coming ages. Still the interests of society demand, that these influences be widened and perpetuated, by the erection of permanent memorials of departed greatness. If this is altogether neglected, or performed in a careless and cursory manner,—if it is entrusted to inadequate hands, or becomes a monument of the partiality of human friendship rather than a faithful account of those qualities and actions which have really made up the character—great injustice is done both to the claims of the living and the dead. It is true indeed, that the character of departed illustrious men may exert its full influence upon

vine mercy, or be willing to diminish the confidence with which piety should labor to confer the saving benefits of religion on lost men. If our author has sometimes made representations of the kind above noticed, we are happy to know that there are others in his works, which are likely to counteract them. On the whole, though by no means faultless, he may be reckoned one of the most powerful, accomplished, and useful writers of the age.

ART. V.—DICKINSON'S PRIZE LETTERS.

Prize Letters to Students, in two parts; By Rev. BAXTER DICKINSON, Newark, N. J.

If there is any one class in our country upon which the philanthropist, the patriot, and the christian, must look with more interest than any other, it is that class which is composed of our active and enterprising young men; especially of those who enjoy the advantages of a liberal education. In almost any circumstances, knowledge is the parent of influence: it gives to one mind the ability of controlling many; and if there are good principles along with it, it may be expected, in proportion to its extent, to help forward the great cause of human happiness. What would Newton, and Bacon, and Locke, and Edwards, have accomplished for the world with only an ordinary degree of knowledge? But we may almost ask, what did they *not* accomplish by means of the actual improvement to which they attained? And if knowledge secures influence in any circumstances, surely there were never circumstances more favorable to give it influence than exist in our own country. We are not trammelled with the fetters of aristocracy. We know nothing, happily, of the influence of mere rank, and have never been taught to do homage to titles, or to respect men for any thing else than their own merits. Here every man may speak and write his own thoughts with perfect freedom; and if he speaks and writes well, he has a fair chance to be heard, and by multitudes; and his thoughts are tried in no worse crucible than reason and common sense. While there is every advantage in this country for knowledge to exert its full influence, there are circumstances connected with the present state and prospects of the country, which render it of the utmost importance that the cultivated intellect of the present and next generation should be directed in a right channel. For it seems to be acknowledged on all hands, that we have reached a critical period in our national history, and that it is to be decided within much less than half a century, what is to be the ultimate destiny

and influence of our government and institutions; whether this land is indeed to be "a name and a praise in the earth," or to be known among the nations as a field of blasted hope, and of political and moral desolation. This mighty question will no doubt be settled before two generations shall have passed away; and hence we naturally look with deep and strong interest not only on the passing movements of the day, on the character and influence of those who have now most to do in regulating our public interests, but also on every thing which will be likely to exert a forming influence on the character of the next generation. There is every reason to believe that our academies, and colleges, and professional institutions of various kinds, enclose at this moment, the germ of far the greater part of the influence which a few years hence will decide all the great questions connected with our national weal or woe. Surely then he cannot be a friend to his country, or a friend to humanity, with whom it is a matter of indifference what is to be the character of the rising generation; especially of that class who are favored with liberal advantages for intellectual culture.

We cannot but regard it as one of the favorable signs of the times, that the class of young men who are in the progress of a liberal education or who are destined to it, have recently awakened a deeper interest in the minds of the reflecting and christian community, than at any former period. One evidence of this is to be found in the annual concert of prayer which has for several of the last years been extensively observed, with especial reference to our literary and professional institutions; and upon which we think we may say without presumption God has already strongly impressed the seal of his approbation. Another similar evidence we find in the many judicious and seasonable articles which have appeared in our periodicals on the same subject; and we may add, in several books which have recently been written to subserve the same purpose. Among these, the work of Mr. Dickinson, the title of which stands at the head of this article, holds an important place. While it is *especially* designed for students, the greater part of it will be found applicable to young men of any occupation, particularly those in the higher walks of life. The design which the author contemplates is twofold:—to establish, first, the importance of a fixed belief in divine revelation, and a cordial reception of its truths; and secondly, the importance of an elevated standard of christian character. This plan very happily meets the case of each of the two great divisions of the class which the book contemplates—those whose religious opinions are yet to be established, and religious character begun; and who of course are opposed to the various forms

of infidelity and irreligion; and those who have made a christian profession and hopefully entered on a christian life, but who nevertheless, from the circumstances in which they are placed, are peculiarly liable to become unduly conformed to the world, and to contract a habit of comparative religious indifference. We are quite sure that neither of these classes can read this book attentively and seriously, without finding it a most useful monitor and guide, amidst the circumstances of temptation and peril by which they are surrounded.

In the remarks which we intend to make in connection with this valuable work, we shall endeavor to fall in, as far as we can, with the general design of the author, by suggesting some of the sources of danger to the moral principles and habits of students, especially such as are connected with public institutions; and to advert briefly, as we pass along, to some of the means of preventing the contemplated evil. We shall consider distinctly the dangers incident to each of the two classes to which we have referred.

We set out with the broad principle that it is of great importance that *all* our educated young men should be brought under the influence of religion. That this is important in respect to that class who are destined to the christian ministry, none but the infidel will question; but it is not so readily perceived how this should be important in regard to those who are destined to other professions, or to no profession at all. We say nothing here of the personal value of religion to every individual, as connected with his own immortal interests; but we say that it is of immense moment that all educated men should be religious, on account of the extended influence which they must exert upon other minds. Happily there are not wanting examples of men of high intellectual culture, out of the clerical profession, to which we may appeal for an illustration of the benign and powerful influence of a devoted piety. There are pious physicians, and pious lawyers, and pious statesmen, who labor as christians in their appropriate sphere; and who often exert a direct influence in favor of the cause of religion, which, if they were ministers of the gospel, would be forbidden to them by the suspicions and jealousies of the multitude. Besides this, all these various classes of cultivated minds, when they are imbued with the influence of religion, are guided in their general movements by a benevolent impulse, and are rendering efficient, though it may be indirect, aid to the great cause of virtue and happiness. If our country is to be preserved from ultimate ruin, who can doubt that this is to be effected through the influence of religion; and where will that influence be likely to be felt to better purpose than in our national councils—at the very fountain of political life and action? We rejoice in

the fact that so many of our educated and gifted young men are directing their attention to the christian ministry—the exigences of the church and the world demand it, and are likely to demand it more and more; but we are far from feeling regret when we see young men of the same class entering the other professions with right motives; for we are fully satisfied that each of these professions furnishes a field for christian usefulness; and we do not wish to see it abandoned to a reckless and unprincipled ambition. Would Wilberforce, or Howard, or Thornton, or John Mason Good, have probably done more for the moral benefit of their fellow men or the glory of Christ, if their lives had been spent in the hallowed vocation of a christian minister? Such men, we repeat, are needed in all professions; and in whatever department of action we find them laboring, provided they labor with facility and effect, we can hardly consider them out of their place. We would not sanction the principle that every pious student must of course direct his eye to the ministry; but we would earnestly maintain that religion is of immense importance to every cultivated man, let his profession or occupation be what it may.

There is danger from various sources that students in the course of their education, may be allured into the paths of skepticism and downright infidelity. One source of danger is found in the fact that in the great majority of cases the youth who enter our literary institutions, have previously had little or no instruction in respect to the evidences of christianity. They may have been accustomed in most instances to attend regularly on the preaching of the gospel; and many of them, from having pious parents, may have had some early impressions of the general importance of religion, and may have been trained to regard it with decent respect; but neither in the one case nor the other is there ordinarily found an intelligent conviction of the divinity of the christian system. If we do not greatly mistake, there is an error on the part of most ministers in preaching so little on the evidences of christianity; dwelling much, (as indeed they should do) on the doctrines of the gospel, but rarely exhibiting the great foundation on which these doctrines are built. The consequence of this is, that young persons especially are left at the mercy of every caviler; and that kind of general impression that christianity is true which is formed under the influence of such inadequate teaching, is far too weak to resist the wiles of an accomplished skeptic. We have known instances, (and we are sure that such instances are not uncommon) in which young men have entered a literary institution without having a single doubt that the bible is a revelation from God; and yet as their faith was little more than a prejudice of education, it gradually gave way, as it was assailed

by the cavils of unbelief, to absolute skepticism. If previous to their being brought into circumstances of temptation, they had been instructed in the evidences of christianity, there is little doubt that they might have withstood the attack upon their principles; and not unfrequently their intellectual conviction of the truth of the bible, might, through the influences of God's Spirit, have ripened into a cordial and sanctifying belief of its doctrines.

Another source of danger is found in the fact that in every literary institution in which a large number of youth are assembled, it may always be expected that there will be some, whose moral and religious principles have already been corrupted. It happens not unfrequently that these are young men who have been accustomed to move in the higher walks of life, who if they are not originally more gifted, are more accomplished, than most with whom they are associated; and not improbably they have all the influence that wealth and family can give them; and perhaps without have a fascinating address, and an easy way of gaining access both to the understanding and the heart. Let but a solitary individual with these advantages enter a literary institution, and become the daily companion of a large number of unsuspecting young men, and it will be strange indeed if he does not soon prove that "one sinner destroyeth much good." Let there be several such characters scattered through a community, and if special means are not used to counteract their influence, it will inevitably work like the leaven of death. What renders their success more probable is, that their infidelity from being seen in the splendor of their own genius or accomplishments, loses its deformity or hatefulness; and the unreflecting youth, while he listens to the sophistry of skepticism, is cheated into the delusion that to become an infidel will confer some claim to intellectual superiority.

If it were possible to know the whole process by which any youth, especially in such circumstances as we are supposing, is brought to the point of renouncing christianity, there is little doubt that it would appear that this melancholy result was to be referred in no small degree to the pride of intellect. Young men are exceedingly ambitious of distinction; and because the path which the gospel marks out is plain and broad and open, so that the simplest intellect can walk in it, they are too prone to leave it in pursuit of something which they imagine more out of the range of weak minds and vulgar prejudices. They contrive strangely to deceive themselves in respect to this matter; for the real truth is that while a few gifted minds have gone off into the mazes of infidelity, and have operated with tremendous energy against the gospel, the great multitude who have risen to high intellectual distinction, have acknowledged christianity to be a religion from heaven, and not a few have stood forth in the ranks of its open advocates.

The youth who should be mainly influenced by a desire to have his name associated with those who have had the highest character for genius and learning, would, even on this principle, if he acted consistently, hold fast his belief in divine revelation; for it admits not of question that the greatest and most accomplished minds have cordially embraced the gospel, and have regarded it as the highest wisdom to surrender themselves implicitly to divine teaching.

We are not of the number of those who would proscribe the Latin and Greek classics as part of a liberal education; still we cannot doubt that as they are sometimes studied, there may be danger of their exerting an influence unfriendly to the moral character, and especially to a strong and settled conviction of the truth of the gospel. Every one knows that there are parts of some of the Latin and Greek poets—though they are now excluded from the books read in most of our colleges—which are of a flagrantly immoral tendency, and which are fitted to strengthen the vicious propensities on the one hand and to cover virtue with blushes on the other. This likewise is unhappily true, to an equal extent of many English works, which are highly popular at the present day—of the writings of Byron, Bulwar and many others. We believe that the minds of the young can be guarded against contamination, from both these quarters by the watchful care of parents and teachers; though we are quite sure that without strict attention in making suitable selections, and suggesting proper cautions, there may be great danger that the student, even while he professes his belief in christianity, may become deeply and dreadfully imbued with polluting principles.

But perhaps a more fruitful source of infidelity than any other in our literary institutions as well as every where else, is the strength of vicious propensities. A youth of a religious education and good habits, falls into bad company; and under the influence of temptation his sober and regular habits soon give place to a course of irregular and criminal indulgences. This of course is not done without a severe conflict with conscience, and without painful recollections of the past and gloomy forebodings of the future; and one way of getting the mastery over these internal remonstrances is by persuading himself that conscience is a bugbear, and all religion a delusion. When this is done, the inward conflict ceases, the path of vice becomes comparatively smooth and easy, and the heart is "hard as the nether millstone." No man would ever be a speculative infidel, if he did not suppose there was some purpose to be answered by it, beyond the mere pleasure of contemplating a favorite theory. The ultimate object is always of a practical nature: it is nothing less than to stop the tormenting corrosions of conscience, and to strew with flowers the path

of transgression. There is great danger that every young man as he becomes vicious in practice, will become an infidel in theory and just in proportion as any literary institution harbors flagrant immorality and crime, it holds out a lure to the path of open infidelity.

If there is so much danger that young men in the course of their education will become skeptical, it is a matter of great moment that every possible means should be used to prevent this evil. And we fully believe that means may be used and in some of our institutions actually are used, which will neutralize to a great extent the danger incident to such a condition: otherwise we should be driven to the conclusion that our institutions for the education of young men could scarcely be regarded as a public blessing.

Every seminary, especially every college in which youth are assembled for the purpose of education, ought to include some distinct provision for gaining a knowledge of the evidences and doctrines of christianity. We refer not here to the fact that every student should be obliged regularly to attend public worship on the sabbath; for this we believe is uniformly done in this country, unless there may be an exception or two in the case of institutions avowedly of no religious character, but really infidel; but what we intend is that there should be included in the course of study, and commenced at as early a period as possible, some practical and systematic view of the holy scriptures. Perhaps this could not be done in a more effectual way than by the introduction of bible classes—a measure which we know has already to some extent been adopted; and though there were to be nothing compulsory in respect to the attendance on this exercise, it is believed that it might easily be conducted in such a manner, that there would be few who would not consider it a privilege to attend upon it. Indeed let the exercise assume whatever character it might, it would be of great importance that it should be rendered as attractive as possible; for it would be idle to expect that young men feeling no special interest in the subject of religion, should be much interested in any religious exercise of a heavy and prosing character. There should be connected with every such institution at least one instructor, who is capable of conducting to advantage such an exercise as that to which we refer; who, without wearying the patience of the students with too much of minute detail, can bring out scripture facts and principles in such a manner, as to awaken their interest, and exalt their views of the bible, and by God's blessing, secure a deep and permanent impression. If every literary institution, besides requiring an occasional recitation on the evidences of christianity, should include some efficient course of instruction in the bible of a private nature, in which

there would be an opportunity to hold up divine truth in the most familiar and practical manner, it would be not only a security against the inroads of infidelity, but would serve to establish an intelligent and abiding conviction of the divinity of the gospel.

Another means of preventing the same evil, is the utmost vigilance and efficiency on the part of those to whose management our institutions are confided. It is admitted on all hands that gross immorality in students, calls for the exercise of discipline; and immorality of some kinds and beyond a certain point, constitutes in the eye of every one a sufficient reason for a temporary or final exclusion from the institution with which the offender is connected. Now we maintain, that the same rule should be applied in respect to open and avowed infidelity, especially where there is a disposition evinced to propagate infidel sentiments. One youth of this character in the midst of such a community as we are contemplating, may do irreparable injury to a multitude. It is his daily business to sow the seeds of corruption and moral death, and the work in which he is engaged, unless Almighty grace interpose to prevent, must in all probability have its issue in the ruin of immortal souls. We do not say that the mere fact that a youth in these circumstances has no belief in the gospel, provided he does not attempt to *propagate* his infidel views, ought to be a sufficient reason for his being sent away from a literary institution; though his very presence, if he were known to be an infidel, we should consider dangerous; but we do maintain that when he is known to be busy in corrupting others, either by his conversation, or by putting into their hands infidel books, it is imperatively due to that community of youth, due to parental affection and parental hopes, due to the best interests of society and of the church, that such an individual if he will persevere in such conduct, should immediately be removed. Possibly he may have genius and acquirements which may give him much personal influence, and promise to bring honor to the institution; but this only renders the case so much the worse, for it gives him the more ability to blast and destroy. He ought to be cut off from society on the same ground that an individual attacked with a contagious disease in the midst of numbers who are strongly predisposed to the same, should be removed without delay; for though the infidel may go out into the world and be an infidel still, and may actually beguile many into the path of error, yet he would not in this case have such direct access to those who emphatically constitute the hope of the next generation; he would be throwing poison over the surface of society, but would not infuse it so directly into the very fountains of public virtue and prosperity.

But there is an indirect influence to be exerted in keeping out

infidelity from our institutions, by looking well to the general cause of morality and virtue. If it is true that infidelity and vice have a mutual action and reaction upon each other, then it follows that every effort to check and subdue the vicious propensities of youth, is an effort to save them from the gulf of skepticism. The more there is of paternal vigilance on the part of teachers in respect to the morals of the pupils, the more prompt they are in their endeavors to arrest them in the beginning of evil, and to save them from being hurried away into vicious indulgences, the more energy they display in separating from their community irreclaimable offenders, in short the more zealously and efficiently they labor for the promotion of virtue and piety, so much the more probable is it that infidelity, if there are solitary cases of her existence among them, will not dare to open her lips or hold up her head. Probably as a general rule, most may be accomplished in keeping down infidelity in all its forms, by laboring diligently and earnestly in the grand cause of truth and virtue. Let any institution come under a decidedly religious influence, let there be much of the breathings of devotion in it, and much of the spirit of piety, and much of disinterested and zealous effort for the honor of Christ, and that is the institution to which youth may resort with the least danger to their moral and religious principles.

It ought to be early and habitually impressed upon the minds of students, that it is extremely unsafe to remain in an unsettled state of mind in respect to this great subject. To say nothing of the fact that so long as this continues, there is no approximation towards the possession of that faith without which it is impossible to please God, it ought to be borne in mind that he who stands on this ground stands on the threshold of open infidelity. Perhaps the evidence of christianity is a subject, which he has never distinctly contemplated, having chosen rather to take for granted that the gospel is true than to be at the trouble of finding out reasons for believing it so—even this state of mind, instead of being a security against yielding to infidel temptations, is almost a certain pledge of falling before them. The only safety is in having a conviction built upon evidence; and this must be the result of attention and examination. Let every student from the beginning be kept upon his guard against this habit of indecision. If he has a solitary doubt in respect to the divinity of the gospel, let him not settle down with that doubt still upon his mind; but let him attentively analyze it, and trace it to its source, and not rest until he has satisfied himself whether or not it has any legitimate foundation. Or if he has been educated in a general belief of christianity, without having ever examined its evidences, let it be his first business to ascertain whether God has really spoken in that

which claims to be his word ; and this point deliberately and intelligently settled in the affirmative, he will have a shield that will be likely to repel the shafts of the skeptic and the socinian.

Let it not be supposed from our having limited our remarks hitherto to the danger of speculative infidelity in students, and the means of guarding against it, that we consider the great point gained when this evil is avoided. This indeed we consider of great moment, though if there be nothing of a more positive nature than this, that is, if the student be kept from embracing infidel sentiments and nothing more, or even if he stop at the point of an intellectual conviction of the authority and doctrines of the gospel, he may still be miserably qualified faithfully to serve his generation : he may be all this, and yet be a mere cumberer of the ground, a wretched profligate, whose presence, wherever he goes, will breed a moral pestilence. It is manifest therefore, that there should be in our institutions a system of effort which stops not in its design short of the entire renovation of the character ; of bringing every student, not only to an intelligent, but cordial belief of the truth of God. This is the great point which ought continually to be kept before the understanding, and to be pressed upon the conscience and the heart ; and any thing short of this, whatever treasures of learning or morality an individual may boast, he must still be reminded, will leave him without any certain pledge of usefulness here, and to eternal poverty and calamity hereafter.

But we hasten to the second part, of the work before us, in which our author very happily urges on students the importance of an elevated standard of christian character. This supposes that they have already made a profession of religion, or at least, hopefully entered on the christian life ; and is designed to guard them against that wretched conformity to the world, that attempt to compromise between the claims of religion and the claims of ambition or sensuality, or some or other of the forms of worldliness, to which students are, in some respects, peculiarly exposed, and which is sure to be a worm at the root of all spiritual prosperity.

The condition here supposed, belongs at this day, to a considerable proportion of the students in our colleges. There are few colleges, if any, which do not number some professors of religion ; and in some of them half the whole number of students, and in some even a greater proportion, are in the communion of the church. Many of these, we may say the great majority of them, from first to last, honor their profession and hold fast their christian integrity, and diffuse around them the light of a holy example. But it cannot be denied that there are cases of a different

sort—cases of individuals who at the beginning of their christian course were active and earnest in the cause of Christ, who have gradually fallen away, and have even given painful reason to doubt, whether they have ever known the renewing influence of the Holy Ghost. Such instances occur frequently enough to show, that any hopefully pious youth on entering college, or joining any public institution, is, in some respects, in peculiar danger of declining in the religious life. While there is the utmost reason for his aiming at high attainments in piety, there is peculiar reason to fear that he will take up with some low standard, and will actually sink far below the standard of his own selection.

One reason for such apprehension is found in the fact that he is necessarily surrounded, to considerable extent, by irreligious influences. He has indeed always been in a world lying in wickedness; and however retired may have been his situation, he has been more or less familiarized to bad example. But perhaps he has been brought comparatively little in direct contact with vice; or at any rate it has not assumed so many tempting forms; or has not pressed him so continually on every side like the atmosphere which he breathes. Now he finds himself in a community, as the case may be, in which large numbers, if not openly vicious, are at least indifferent to religion; and among these he necessarily finds to some extent his daily associates; and such is the power of example, and especially bad example, even over christians themselves, that there is great danger in such a case, of a sad declension in the spirit and practice of piety. There is danger that the young christian in these circumstances, will gradually lose the tenderness of his conscience, and in proportion as vice or error or the utter neglect of religion becomes familiar to him, that he will come to look upon them with diminished abhorrence, and before he is aware that he has begun to decline, will actually have been going far from God by a greivous backsliding.

Nor is the danger of declension in pious students to be referred to the example of the vicious and careless alone, but also to that of negligent professors. It almost always happens, that there are in every such institution, some who, though they have confessed Christ before the world, give but little evidence of being his cordial followers; whose vain conversation and trifling deportment, give the lie to their christian profession, and bring an enduring reproach on the Redeemer's cause. Now persons of this description, not only do immense harm to religion by encouraging the openly wicked, and those who neglect religion altogether, but by lessening the spirituality of many, whose light would otherwise shine more conspicuously before the world. Especially where

these loose professors happen to possess natural qualities to render them attractive, when they are amiable and intelligent and do not in any way directly oppose religion, but only profess to be a little more liberal in their notions than others, there is great danger that many will be induced by the influence of their example, to lower the standard of christian character. We have known some instances in which this remark has been most painfully exemplified, in which a gay and worldly professor has succeeded in doing that for young christians around him, which probably a hundred infidels or scoffers would have tried in vain to effect; and the reason has been, that in the one case, they were unsuspecting of evil, and dreamed not that temptation could lurk under so hallowed a guise as a christian profession; in the other, there would have been an open and day-light attack, which would have shown them at once the nature of their danger, and put them into the attitude of resistance.

There is reason still further to apprehend the evil of which we speak from the fact, that the demands which are made upon the student's time, or rather his own zeal to occupy himself exclusively in study, may leave him with too little leisure for those duties which are more immediately connected with his growth in grace. It is impossible for any christian in any circumstances to make rapid progress in religion, unless he is diligent in the use of the private means of grace; in examining his own heart, in studying and applying God's word, and in seeking daily and earnestly the influences of the Holy Spirit. In order that these means should be used to the best advantage, it is necessary that they should be used in some degree systematically;—that the christian should have his set seasons for the exercises of the closet; and that these should be sacredly maintained, so far as possible, against all intrusions. We doubt whether an individual can be found, who has made very high attainments in religion, who has suffered the duties of the closet to be at the control of passing circumstances, so that they have been performed or neglected as convenience has seemed to dictate. But if we mistake not, there is great danger that a habit of close application to study will gradually weaken the habit of a regular and devout performance of the class of duties to which we have referred. The danger is the greater because it is admitted, that a student is bound to be diligent in acquiring knowledge, and that the acquisitions which he makes have an important bearing upon his future usefulness; for in view of such an argument as this, easily might conscience withhold her upbraidings for what in other circumstances would be regarded a most culpable neglect of duty. He reasons thus with himself—“if it is true that in these intellectual acquisitions there is the germ

of any future usefulness ; if I am hereby preparing to serve God and my generation with the best effect, then surely I may be pardoned for a little remissness in those duties which lie more immediately between me and my God." Such reasoning, though the student may not suspect it, is nothing better than the sophistry of a deceitful heart. Wherever it prevails it is seen to be the harbinger of a deep and melancholy decline ; and sooner or latter the individual will find that instead of having been influenced by sober reason, he had only been playing a trick with his own conscience.

There is yet another source of danger in respect to pious students, in the fact that they are liable to come unduly under the influence of a desire of literary distinction. We do not mean to condemn a proper degree of this spirit, or to intimate that there is any inconsistency between a strong desire and persevering efforts to attain to literary excellence, and the cultivation of a high degree of spirituality. Nevertheless there is danger that this desire (innocent and even commendable as it is when kept within proper bounds,) may mount up to a spirit of unhallowed rivalry ; and the desire to excel may rather be a desire to leave others in the back ground, and to triumph in having eclipsed them, than to lay a foundation for distinguished usefulness. Where this latter kind of emulation prevails (and considering the tendencies of human nature what young man who has any self-respect is not exposed to it?) it is sure to operate unfavorably upon the growth of christian character. It is opposed to the humility, the meekness, the benevolence of the gospel. It is at war with that divine injunction, "Look not every one upon his own things, but every one also upon the things of others." And while it is itself an evil, it generates other bad affections, which mar the christian character and retard religious improvement. Many a pious student, from having neglected to watch his heart in this particular, has found himself at a great distance from the gentleness, and benignity and humility of the gospel.

We have said enough perhaps to justify the apprehension, that our religious students may find a severer ordeal in a college life, than they would be prepared to expect ; and that there is great danger that during the period of their education may be fraught with decline and injury to their christian character. This, however, is far enough from being a necessary evil ; and where it is actually experienced, it is always to be referred to that want of vigilance, of self-control and of communion with God on the part of the student, which constitute an effectual security against the beginning of evil. We will suggest a few hints to aid the christian student in holding on his way amid the temptations of a college life.

Our first suggestion is, that he should, from the beginning, have a distinct impression of his danger. Let him be apprized, that the moment he becomes connected with such a community as he must expect to find in any of our large literary institutions, he has temptations to encounter on the right hand and on the left. There is danger that his heart will be drawn away from God and from duty; that the spirit of devotion will gradually decline until his private duties become a weariness to him, if they are not entirely neglected. There is danger that the spirit of the world will creep over him, so that his spiritual comforts will die, and his example will become unedifying and injurious, and a cloud will settle over his prospects of usefulness. Let him know all this at the very commencement of his course from the lips of some judicious and experienced friend and counselor, and we may hope with good reason that it will awaken in him a spirit of active vigilance. Every condition in life has its peculiar temptations, the force of which is learned only by experience. The pious student cannot *fully* know those which await *him*, from any description he may have of them; but he may know so much as to be put upon his guard, and to be kept from falling into the path of the destroyer.

It is of great moment also that he should be deeply impressed with the consideration that the direction which his christian character assumes during the period of his education, will probably continue till the close of life. If, during this period, he maintains a deep and settled spirituality of mind, and keeps himself in subjection to God's word and an enlightened conscience, and makes it his steady aim to obey the Master whom he has professed to serve, there is the best pledge that could be obtained, that his future life will be a scene of christian self-denial, and living faith, and earnest devotedness to the Redeemer's cause. But if, on the other hand, the period of his education is marked by a grievous backsliding, by a criminal conformity to the world, by a forgetfulness or neglect of covenant vows, then it is almost equally certain that, whatever his profession may be, his subsequent life will yield but a feeble testimony to the power and excellence of the gospel. What pious youth who is reminded of this at the commencement of his education, will not be stimulated by it to vigorous efforts to keep himself unspotted from the world? If his heart glows with love to Christ, what thought is there which he cannot sooner admit than that he should live to dishonor his cause, or even to do less for its advancement than God has put within his power?

It is manifest that no student in the circumstances which we are supposing, can expect to make progress in religion without a

large share of christian decision. From the hour that he places his foot within college walls, he must be perfectly inflexible in regard to duty. He must resolve that come what will in the way of temptation, he will meet it resolutely and fearlessly, casting himself on almighty strength. He must be proof against the sneers of the scorner, and the caresses and blandishments of the gay, and the insidious wiles of the crafty, and what is perhaps worse than all, the ensnaring influence of the heartless or backslidden professor. He must determine that he will throw himself on the side of God and his truth and his cause, though he should stand alone the gazing-stock and the laughing-stock of all around him. He must have that spirit which would lead him to walk in the path of duty, though it should lead to a fiery furnace or to a lion's den; in short the great principle by which his whole conduct must be governed is, that "duties are his, consequences are the Lord's." With such a spirit exhibiting itself in perfect consistency with all that is discreet and lovely and of good report, the christian student has nothing to fear; but with a timid and compromising temper, with a disposition to go round obstacles rather than to meet them, and to make principle in a degree at least subservient to convenience, he will keep up a perpetual war with his own conscience, and will inflict wounds upon the Redeemer's cause which no subsequent efforts of his will be able to heal.

Another consideration of great importance to the pious student is, that he should faithfully and systematically observe closet duties. We have already alluded to the fact, that there is often a strong temptation to make a compromise with conscience for a cold and hurried and only occasional attendance upon these duties; but if it is true in general that just in proportion as these are neglected, the spirit of piety declines, it is eminently true as it respects students; for it is here only that they can hope to find strength to roll back from them the tide of temptation. No matter how pressing may be their studies, or how great their ambition to excel, or what inroads may be made upon their time by company, their closets *must not* be neglected; the spirit of devotion *must not* be suffered to decline; but decline it inevitably will, unless it is kept up by frequent intercourse with God. Much in this respect depends on habit. Let a student come to think it impossible, that he should be regular in his private devotions at all times, and to admit the idea that he may pass them over occasionally, and most probably he will soon find that every thing in relation to that matter is done at random; but let him take the ground at once that nothing which he can control should keep him from regularly visiting his closet, and let him adhere to that ground but a

little while, and the obstacles to his maintaining it will be effectually overcome. Nor will he be the less, but the more successful in his studies, for being faithful and constant in his devotions.

Another important help to a pious student may be found in cultivating christian intercourse with those of his own character. We fear it too often happens in our colleges, that many professors of religion have little to do with each other in reference to the subject in which they are most of all interested; and that much of their intercourse is unworthy of the high character which they profess to sustain. Not that we wish to see them cultivating a gloomy or unsocial spirit, or assuming airs inconsistent with christian cheerfulness; but we do think that they owe it to themselves, and to the church, and to the cause of Christ, and especially to their irreligious companions around them, that their conversation be such as becometh the gospel of Christ; that they are fellow helpers together unto the kingdom of God. Let them, as they have opportunity, hold meetings for prayer and religious conference; for imparting mutual strength for the duties and trials to which they are daily called; and let them also in their more private intercourse, in the occasional meetings of two or three friends, endeavor to help each other forward in the christian life. Thus in their daily communion will they be a blessing to each other, and a blessing to all who contemplate their example. Their own souls will be quickened and comforted, and the savor of their piety will diffuse itself all around them.

There is yet another way, and it is the last to which we shall advert, in which religious students may keep themselves from evil, and advance their own sanctification—we refer to their direct efforts for helping forward the cause of religion in the institution with which they are connected; and especially in endeavoring to impress their thoughtless associates with the importance of securing the interests of their souls. We are aware that this duty of speaking to the impenitent in any circumstances, requires discretion; but in the case supposed, where the person speaking is a companion of the person spoken to, and he who is addressed has perhaps no ear and no heart for serious things, the utmost prudence is necessary in order to accomplish, or even not utterly to defeat, the desired object. Every thing of a dictatorial, or forbidding, or assuming nature should be carefully avoided; and the spirit of kindness and love should breathe in the language and speak in the countenance; and the impression should be made, if possible, that the admonition is dictated by nothing but the sincerest friendship. Where this is done, there is good reason to expect a happy result. But where an individual fails of this,

he may talk, but probably it will be worse than beating the air. Let a religious student cultivate an habitual interest in the spiritual welfare of those around him, and let him, without being officious or obtrusive, manifest that interest, by a course of judicious and affectionate and persevering effort to save souls from death, and it cannot but be that he will find his own heart the fruitful soil of good affections and lofty christian purposes; and he will be going rapidly forward to the fulness of the stature of a perfect person in Christ.

In view of the subject which has been before us in this article, what christian is there but will prize more highly, and acknowledge more perfectly, and supplicate more earnestly, those richest of all blessings—revivals of religion? Blessed be God, these visitations of mercy have already been richly experienced in many of our seminaries of learning; they have purified the moral atmosphere which prevails there; and the church has lifted her voice in a thousand songs of gratitude and triumph, that so much talent and learning have already been consecrated by revivals, in those institutions, to the Redeemer's cause. What has been already, we fully believe will be hereafter, and in a still higher degree. We confidently anticipate in reliance on God's grace, that through the influence of revivals, our literary institutions are to become more and more the nurseries of the church; that infidelity, and profligacy, and all open irreligion will ere long be compelled to seek some other retreat; that the bible standard of christian character, and no other, will prevail; and that every college and academy in our land, will be brought under the hallowed and sanctifying influences of the gospel. How long a period may elapse before this blessed consummation, we pretend not to decide; but surely we have a right to expect it sooner or later; we ought to expect it; and it should animate our prayers, and quicken our efforts, for its speedy arrival.

But we ought not to close our remarks without reverting to the excellent work which has suggested them. It is written with much perspicuity and force, and is evidently the product of a highly disciplined and cultivated mind. The style is rather bold and strong than flowing, but still possesses much of that kind of attraction which is desirable, considering the class of persons to whom the work is addressed. We confess we have been so much interested in it, that we feel half disposed, on finding ourselves at the end to quarrel with our author, that he had not kept us longer; and we would seriously suggest to him, whether if the book passes into other editions, (as we think it deserves to do,) he may not advantageously increase its interest by increasing its size. We perceive that it has been re-printed in

England, and spoken of with much favor by some of their periodicals. May its benign effects be felt on both sides of the water, and the excellent lessons it conveys, help to form and elevate the character of every coming generation.

ART. VI.—DR. TYLER'S REMARKS AND DR. TAYLOR'S REPLY.

Remarks on Dr. Taylor's Letter to Dr. Hawes. BY BENNET TYLER, D. D.
Reply to Dr. Tyler's Remarks. BY NATHANIEL W. TAYLOR, D. D.

WE are glad to see, that the question between Dr. Taylor and those of his brethren who differ from him, is beginning to be placed on its true ground. Their real differences relate, not to those great fundamental facts, or *doctrines* which constitute New-England calvinism; but to certain *theories* and philosophical explanations, by which those doctrines are defended, and reconciled with other acknowledged truths. Accordingly Dr. Tyler says, "to the eleven articles of Dr. Taylor's creed, I do not object." "I have no doubt he *really* believes the doctrines stated in his creed." Among these doctrines, we find the following, viz. that of the trinity—the eternal decrees of God, extending to all actual events, sin not excepted—the entire depravity of mankind by nature, as the consequence of Adam's first sin—the vicarious atonement of Jesus Christ—the necessity of regeneration by the Holy Spirit—the eternal election of those who are renewed unto salvation—and the final perseverance of all the elect. These doctrines, beyond all question, constitute the calvinistic system; and as Dr. Taylor is acknowledged sincerely to maintain them all, he is of course fully acquitted by Dr. Tyler of any departure from the received faith of the New-England churches.

In connection with these doctrines, however, Dr. Tyler adopts certain philosophical theories, which he regards as absolutely essential to a consistent belief in the doctrines themselves. Some of these theories Dr. Taylor rejects, and proposes other solutions of the facts, which are better adapted, in his view, to support the calvinistic system, in which both parties confessedly agree. Here then is the exact point of difference between these two brethren; and it is avowedly on this ground, that Dr. Tyler comes forward to accuse one whom he admits to be sound in the faith, of entering on "a gradual undermining process" to destroy the fundamental doctrines of the gospel. Now we are not greatly surprised, when we look back on the progress of theological discussion in our country, to find that Dr. Tyler has so intermingled his philosophy with his theology—has so identified his theories with his doctrines—as to believe sincerely, that no man can consistently re-