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ART. I. REVIEW OF EDWARDS ON THE WILL.

By Rev. ENOCH POND, Professor in Theological Seminary, Bangor, Me.

A careful and strict Inquiry into the modern prevailing notions of that Freedom of Will, which is supposed to be essential to Moral Agency, Virtue and Vice, Reward and Punishment, Praise and Blame. By Jonathan Edwards, President of New-Jersey College.

A Philosophical and Practical Treatise on the Will. By Thomas C. Upham. Professor of Mental and Moral Philosophy in Bowdoin College, 1834.

A NATURAL and beneficial effect of controversy in the Christian church has been, to draw attention and interest towards important controverted truths, to bring them into clearer light, and cause them to be better understood, and more justly appreciated. Such was the effect of the Arian controversy in respect to the doctrine of the Trinity; and of the Pelagian controversy in respect to the doctrine of depravity; and of the controversy of Luther with the Romanists, in respect to the doctrine of justification by faith. And such, it may be added, has been the effect of the Arminian controversy in respect to the doctrine of God's universal purposes, and the consistency of these purposes with human freedom. Much attention has been bestowed upon these difficult subjects in the controversies of the last two hundred years; nor has it been altogether in vain. It is not too much to say that, by some at least, these subjects are now better understood, and more justly and faithfully exhibited, than they have been at any time since the days of the apostles.

The Arminian controversy originated in Holland, near the commencement of the seventeenth century. The points involved in it had been the occasion of inquiry and discussion at earlier periods; but they were now introduced for the first time into the Reformed churches, in a way to excite attention and engender strife.

ART. V. REVIEW OF THE WORKS OF REV. JOHN
ANGELL JAMES.

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- I. *Christian Fellowship, or the Church Members' Guide.*
- II. *The Christian Father's Present to his Children.*
- III. *Christian Charity explained, or the Influence of Religion upon Temper stated, in an Exposition of the thirteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians.*
- IV. *The Family Monitor, or a Help to Domestic Happiness.*
- V. *The Anxious Inquirer after Salvation, directed and encouraged.*

THERE is scarcely any thing in connexion with the progress of the Gospel in these latter years, which strikes the mind of the Christian more impressively or delightfully, than the increased amount of intercourse it has involved between the disciples of Christ, not only of different communions, but especially of different countries. Within less than half a century past, the mass of Christian professors in this country were almost entirely ignorant of the condition and prospects of the church, in any other land than their own; and the same remark would no doubt equally apply to nearly every other country in which Christianity has been the prevailing religion. It is true indeed that a few of our most distinguished divines were in habits of correspondence with some of the learned theologians of Europe, but the intelligence which came hither through this channel, was limited to a few; for there were no religious newspapers or periodicals by which it could be borne, as on the wings of the morning, to the most obscure and distant hamlet in the land. But since the modern era of Christian benevolence has opened upon the world, the church has been learning the secret that she is substantially one body; that though mountains may rise, and oceans may roll, to separate her members from one another, yet they can still maintain, in various ways, a delightful communion; and, what is more, that in that spirit of charity which has begun so signally to control her movements, there is a celestial energy by which she can scale the still more formidable barriers that have been erected by a cold and sectarian jealousy. In most of the great religious movements of the present day, we may see unequivocal evidence that the church as a body is losing

sight comparatively of the less in her increased regard for the greater ; that she is becoming more willing to sacrifice local and party considerations, to her own spiritual interests and the honour of her Head ; and that even Christians who dwell on opposite sides of the earth, and who hold different denominational peculiarities, and who have never seen, and have not the prospect of seeing each other in the flesh, can enter into a cordial co-operation for the advancement of the great cause of truth and righteousness.

As it cannot be questioned that the more intimate fellowship which exists among Christians in different countries results, in a great degree, from the spirit of benevolent action which has been poured out upon the church, so it is easy to see how the one has operated to the production of the other. The spirit of Christian benevolence is social and expansive in its very nature ; and it were impossible that it should operate in any community of Christians without purifying them in a greater or less degree from a grovelling selfishness, and leading them to look abroad, not only for objects of charity, but also for a fraternal co-operation. And this is just what has been realized in the recent benevolent movements of the church. The true disciples of Christ all over the world have begun to feel, that they are labouring for the same great object ; and while they are naturally attracted to each other by the spirit of Christian affection, they understand that union is strength ; and that the church may be expected to labour the most efficiently when she labours the most harmoniously. Hence the necessity for an extended intercourse between Christians of different countries with a view to sustain and direct to the best advantage their various benevolent operations. Not only have numerous individuals in our country corresponded extensively with those who have been most active in the benevolent enterprise abroad, but not a small number of our charitable institutions have been in the habit of a constant interchange of views with kindred institutions in various parts of the world, and especially in Great Britain, which has the honour of taking the lead in these glorious achievements of Christian charity. And then in connexion with these institutions, or in consequence of them, there have been established a multitude of periodicals, by means of which the intelligence which is received and communicated, becomes almost instantly the common property of an extensive Christian community ;

and thus even the most obscure Christian has an opportunity of knowing the passing history of many great and good minds, to whom he has no immediate access, and even of holding communion with them in the contemplation of their devout thoughts, and lofty purposes, and noble deeds. And there is the monthly concert, in which the church forgets, to a great extent, every thing but her own unity and the power of faith and prayer; in which she comes before the throne as if she bore but the one name which she takes from her exalted Head; in which oceans and distances are overlooked, and each member, baptized into the spirit of Christian love, intercedes for all the rest as a community of brethren. Nor may we omit to mention that the progressive benevolent operations of the day have led many Christians of this and other countries to travel extensively in foreign lands; and thus they have enjoyed the privilege of seeing face to face those with whom they have before been united in faith and prayer and effort, and have prepared themselves to become still more efficiently fellow-helpers with them unto the kingdom of God. We cannot forbear, in this connexion, to advert to the fact of our American churches having been recently visited by a most respectable delegation from the Congregational Union of London and Wales. We are quite sure that we record the universal sentiment of our churches when we say, that those able and excellent brethren who have recently left our shores, after a temporary sojourn among us, have done much to hallow and strengthen the tie that binds British and American Christians to each other; and while their impressive and eloquent addresses have been listened to with delight, and have helped to give a new impulse to some of our own great benevolent institutions, the kindly and fraternal spirit which they have exhibited, has not only secured to them the strong regard and enduring attachments of multitudes of Christians in our country, but has deepened the interest which is here felt in the great and good operations which they are helping to carry forward at home. As they were cordially welcomed here by those who were prepared to honour them, not only for their personal worth, but for the errand which had brought them hither, so they have borne away with them the affectionate wishes of thousands who have felt the benign influence of their visit, and who will gratefully retain the recollection of it to the hour of their meeting with them in a better world.

We trust that the intercourse which has been so happily begun in this fraternal arrangement between so large a portion of the American and British churches, will continue, and increase, and produce its legitimate fruits on both sides of the Atlantic.

Among those who have contributed most efficiently to an increased degree of intercourse between Christians in our own country and in Great Britain, is the author of the several publications which it is proposed briefly to notice in this article. Nearly all our clerical brethren who have crossed the ocean within the last few years, have, we believe, had the privilege of making Mr. James' personal acquaintance; and they are ready with one consent to bear testimony to the deep interest he has evinced in the prosperity and influence of our institutions. Not a few of his letters, addressed to his American correspondents, have circulated in our religious newspapers, and have breathed a spirit of fraternal good will towards us, which have made us regard him more as a brother and friend, than a stranger; and more than all, his publications have long been familiarly known in almost every religious circle in our land, and have exerted, and are no doubt destined still to exert, an influence here, which the excellent author may well reckon among the richest tokens of divine favour. These works, as they are entirely practical and popular in their character, are well adapted to an extensive circulation; and we see no reason why they should not fully maintain their standing and usefulness with generations to come. Our design in this article is, not to report the existence of any thing that is new, nor to establish the merits of any thing that is doubtful, but to commend to the attention of our readers publications of acknowledged excellence, and to show that they are in many respects peculiarly adapted to meet the moral exigencies of our own country.

Before we proceed to notice Mr. James' works, it may gratify our readers that we should just advert to a few of the leading facts in his history; for where we approve and admire the author, it is natural that we should wish to know something of the man. He was born at Blandford in Dorsetshire, June 6, 1785. His family on both sides were pious Dissenters. His father was a respectable linen draper, and had originally intended him for the same business. At the age of eighteen, however, having previously, as he believed, felt the power of religion in his own soul, he relin-

quished secular pursuits, and commenced preparation for the ministry at Gosport, in the institution over which the excellent Dr. Bogue for many years presided;—an institution of a somewhat more private character than most of the dissenting colleges, and nearly akin to that in which the Rev. Mr. Jay studied, at Painswick, under the instruction of the venerable Cornelius Winter. The literary advantages which this seminary furnished were comparatively slender; but this deficiency was in a good measure made up by the uncommon assiduity and devotedness of the teacher, and the exemplary diligence and fine powers of the pupil. Agreeably to a custom which extensively prevails at the theological academies in England, and which, whatever may be its advantages, we are constrained, on the whole, to regard with disapprobation,—Mr. James commenced preaching almost as soon as he had entered upon his theological studies; and in the year 1805, before he was twenty-one years of age, he was settled over the church to which he has ever since ministered, at Birmingham. At the commencement of his labours, the church was small, having been reduced by an unhappy schism to about forty members; but under the benign influence of his ministry, in connexion with the higher influence of the Spirit of God, it has gradually increased till it numbers upwards of six hundred, and, in point of spiritual feeling and benevolent action, is among the most influential churches in Great Britain.

As a preacher, Mr. James is understood to hold a high place among the most able and popular of the day. After the manner of most of the English Dissenters, he generally speaks from a well digested plan, leaving the language to be supplied chiefly by his thoughts and feelings, at the moment of utterance. His appearance in the pulpit is imposing and dignified, and his manner is at once persuasive and commanding, tender and energetic, exhibiting a soul deeply impressed with its own bold and lofty thoughts, and forgetful of every thing else but the great end which the preaching of the Gospel is designed to accomplish. His discourses are generally framed with much skill, and are adapted not less to arouse and quicken, than to guide and edify; not less to seize hold of the conscience, than to warm and elevate the feelings; not less to impress the careless sinner with a sense of his ruin, than to search the heart of the hypocrite, and build up the true Christian in the most holy faith. If we do

not mistake, his preaching has in it more that is addressed immediately to the conscience, than that of most British ministers; while yet it is full of evangelical truth, and always imbued with the gentle and lovely spirit of the Gospel. In the great benevolent institutions of the country, he bears a prominent part, and by the bold and striking conceptions, and prompt and fervid eloquence, which characterize his public speeches, he always interests and frequently enchains his audience. He is a zealous Dissenter, and has written an able and popular work in defence of non-conformity; but the candour, and kindness, and dignity which mark his deportment, are not overlooked by his brethren of the Established Church. We remember to have had some gratifying illustrations of this a few years ago, while we were stopping a short time in his neighbourhood; and some of our readers may recollect to have read, within a few months, in the report of the anniversary of one of the great benevolent institutions in London, that some Episcopal clergyman, who was a neighbour of Mr. James, paid, in the course of his speech, a fine tribute to his liberality and good spirit, upon which Mr. James, with his accustomed delicacy and pertinence, reciprocated the kindness which his brother of the establishment had expressed, and showed himself ready for a cordial co-operation in every good work.

All Mr. James' publications which we have seen, with the single exception of the somewhat controversial work to which we have just referred, on the great question of dissent from the Church of England, belong substantially to the same class, and are intended either directly to influence men to attend to their immortal interests, or to direct and encourage them in some one or other of the various departments of Christian duty. They are all eminently practical in their tendency; and no person, whatever his condition or relation in life may be, can read them, but will find much that he can apply either for the correction of his errors, or for his improvement in virtue and holiness. They are characterized in a remarkable degree, not only by the seriousness, and dignity, and unction, but also by the loveliness of Christianity; and he who reads them will not find it easy to resist the impression, that he is communing with a spirit on which the Gospel has exerted some of its most benign and gracious influences. They are distinguished, also, for sound, practical views of religious truth and duty, and indicate a

mind free from all erratic tendencies, and capable of holding with a steady hand the scales of evidence, and capable of discriminating with accuracy, as well between the true and false in opinion, as the right and wrong in practice. And finally, they possess uncommon attractions on the score of style; being so simple and perspicuous, that the most unlettered reader cannot fail to comprehend their meaning, and yet so elevated and beautiful, that the man of taste and refinement can read them with delight. Having said thus much of the general character of these works, we will now very briefly notice each of them in the order in which we have placed their titles, and we believe in the order in which they have been published.

"*The Church Members Guide*" is just what its title denotes, a manual for communicants, designed to instruct them in respect to the nature of a Christian church, and the various privileges which are secured to them, and the various duties which devolve upon them, in virtue of their church membership. As Mr. James is both in principle and practice a Congregationalist, his views of this subject are, of course, in some degree, modified by the general system of church government, to which he is attached; and while, on some minor points, a Presbyterian might find occasion to dissent from him, an Episcopalian, and especially a member of the Church of England, would be obliged to subtract largely from his book before he could give it an unqualified approval. This remark applies in a degree to the American editions of the work, the only ones which we have ever seen, but we judge that it applies still more strongly to the English editions, as the American editor intimates that he has omitted those parts of it which relate to Church establishments, from a conviction that they would be of no practical use in this country. Without attempting either to vindicate or oppose the peculiar form of church government, which this book takes for granted to be scriptural, we have no hesitation in saying, that the members of any communion may read it with edification and profit. They may learn from it much which is calculated to deepen the sense of their responsibility, to extend the circle of their influence, and to increase their interest in all that is connected with the prosperity of the Redeemer's kingdom.

"*The Christian Fathers' Present to his Children*," is a work in which the author has embodied with great felicity

“his own parental wishes, objects, and pursuits.” It is written in the form of direct address, so that the child, in reading it, seems to hear a parent’s voice speaking in every page. It goes over an extensive field, and treats, with admirable success, the very topics which every intelligent Christian parent would wish to urge upon the attention of his children; and we can scarcely imagine any thing after the Bible which such a parent, on his dying bed, would be more disposed to put into his children’s hands to be read, and studied, and reduced to practice, after the voice of parental instruction and counsel is still in death. We are far from intimating that this book, good as it is, is ever to be substituted by a Christian parent in the place of his own direct personal efforts; nothing indeed can be an adequate substitute for these, for God has appointed him the natural guardian of his children’s interest, and has made it his duty to impart to them religious instruction and counsel, just as truly as he has to protect them in infancy from the winter’s cold; and he who should think to discharge his parental obligations merely by proxy, satisfying himself with saying nothing to them respecting their immortal interests, on the ground that he has put into their hands a book from which they can learn much more than he is capable of teaching them, would not only miserably deceive himself, but run the hazard of being indirectly accessory to his children’s ruin; for though the book should be ever so well adapted to aid the moral and religious improvement of youth, it is exceedingly doubtful whether it would be read at all, or if read, whether its instructions would be heeded, if the truths which it inculcates were never enforced by a parent’s lips, or illustrated by a parent’s example. While, therefore, we would strongly recommend this book to the attention of every Christian parent, it is not as a substitute for what he is himself able to do, but as means of enabling him to do more; it is not with a view to take his own appropriate work out of his hands, but to second every effort that he makes, by a most benign and persuasive influence. Let the Christian parent ever remember, that he has himself an advantage in forming the characters of his children, which it is impossible any one else should possess; for while in most cases they pass several of their earliest years directly under his eye, they look up to him as their first earthly protector, and are disposed not less by filial respect than filial sensibility to heed his admoni-

tions; and he in turn can speak to them from the warmth of a parent's heart; and parental affection is not only inventive but eloquent, and will often controul the inclinations, and melt the heart of a child, when any thing else would be frigid and unavailing. We recommend *the Christian Father's Present*, therefore, to every parent, as a most happy auxiliary to his own appropriate parental influence; and if a parent is to be providentially separated from his children, we know of nothing which may better stand as his own representative in his absence from them, nothing which will be more likely to recall to their remembrance his own pious counsels, or to keep them out of the path of temptation, or confirm them in habits of virtue and piety. It is earnestly to be hoped, that this unpretending volume may gain a far more extensive circulation among our youth than it has yet done; and we trust it will be part of the reward of its excellent author, to know that it has been instrumental of moulding the character of many a young person for usefulness, and honour, and immortal life.

The next in order of Mr. James' publications is "*Christian Charity explained, or the Influence of Religion upon Temper stated.*" Though not in the form of sermons, it seems to have been the substance of a series of discourses, which the author addressed to his charge, on the thirteenth chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians. It is a faithful and beautiful exposition of that interesting portion of Scripture, and brings out the various truths which are there exhibited, with great simplicity, perspicuity, and effect. As it is designed to set forth and recommend one of the loveliest and most attractive features of Christianity, so the spirit which it breathes is in accordance with the subject which it illustrates; the very spirit which heaven-born Charity herself always enkindles in the bosom which she is permitted to inhabit. It is eminently adapted to purify the human heart of its unkindly temper and feelings; to make man disinterested and generous, and benevolent in his intercourse with his fellow-man, to banish from the Christian brotherhood the suspicions, and jealousies, and alienations of party, and to bring back that state of things in the church which once led even its enemies to exclaim, "Behold how these Christians love one another." The author, we hardly need say, is far enough from confounding Christian charity with that spurious liberality which professes to regard all differences of

religious opinion as unimportant, though with melancholy inconsistency it is usually restless, and sometimes vindictive, when its own peculiarities happen to be called in question. The charity which this work recommends, is, we believe, the very charity which the Bible inculcates; pure, peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, without partiality and without hypocrisy. He who walks in the path which this volume marks out, while he will hold the truth, will yet hold it in love; while he will resolutely oppose and denounce sin, will yet exhibit a spirit of kindness towards the sinner; while he will be faithful to his own conviction of duty, will yet study an inoffensive manner of discharging it; while he will have a preference for his own denomination, will yet feel a cordial complacency towards all in whom he sees reflected the image of his Master. We wish this work may circulate as an antidote to the spirit of party strife. We cordially bid it God speed over the whole church, as the harbinger of blessings and the friend of peace. We would that it might find its way into every denomination, into every family, into the hands of every Christian, and that the pure and heavenly truth which it inculcates might shed their benign influence to heal many a bleeding wound in the body of Christ.

“*The Family Monitor, or a Help to Domestic Happiness*” sufficiently explains its nature and design, by its title. It offers itself to every family into which it finds its way, as a religious friend, and suggests to every member, whatever may be his domestic relations, considerations which are adapted to improve and elevate his character. The husband and the wife, the parent and the child, the master and the servant, may here each find a safe guide and counsellor; and we have only to conceive of a family, every member of which should live habitually in accordance with the rules which this book prescribes, to imagine a scene of the most perfect happiness which this world can afford. It is much to be regretted that there is so much occasion for such a book as this, even in Christian families, growing out of the extensive disregard that prevails, to the domestic relations, and the little attention that is paid to the culture of domestic religion and the promotion of domestic happiness. It cannot be concealed, that in many families composed principally of professors of religion, there is but a slight recognition of religious obligation in any of the family arrangements; and an-

other fact equally unquestionable is, that many a family which to an occasional visitor may wear only a bright and cheerful aspect, and may seem like a repository of all that is serene, and lovely, and of good report, in domestic life, has in it the elements of perpetual disquietude ; and to the eye that has an opportunity of piercing beyond the fair exterior, and viewing the occurrences of every day, there appears nothing which is not fitted to poison the best joys of life. Let it be remembered, moreover, that it is impossible to over-rate the importance of the domestic constitution in its influence upon public virtue and happiness ; for here the mind receives its first direction ; the principles for the subsequent regulation of the conduct are here acquired ; the heart here receives impressions which will be likely to be found among the elements of the future character ; in short, whatever is thought, or felt, or spoken, or done, in the family, is a seed of public prosperity or of public calamity ; the influence of domestic virtue or vice cannot be confined within the narrow sphere in which it has its immediate operation ; but it goes abroad to purify an extensive moral atmosphere, or to impart to it a more deadly contagion. When it is remembered that this great nation of which we are a part is made up of families, who does not see that it depends much on the domestic constitution whether we are to be continued in the greatness and dignity of a free people, or to see our noble institutions giving place to the stern authority of despotism, or the wild horrors of anarchy ? for if true virtue is the only safety of a nation, and if we are to look to the family as the chief nursery of virtue, then unquestionably the great question is here in a great measure to be decided which involves our national prosperity or national ruin. We urge Mr. James' book, then, upon the serious attention of every family in our land, and of every member of each family, not merely because it is adapted to diffuse a charm over the scenes of domestic life, and to render those who constitute the household fellow-helpers together in all that will minister to their mutual enjoyment, but because it is fitted to form them for useful and honourable action ; for discharging with fidelity the duties which they owe to their country, and their fellow-men at large, and last though not least, because it looks beyond the world, and aims to prepare them for a higher state of being, in which will be found all the elements of a complete and endless joy.

From the time that the last mentioned work was published, Mr. James' pen slumbered for several years, with the exception of his having written in the mean time his small work on "*Dissent*," to which we have already had occasion to advert, and which, on account of the little interest which is here felt in the subject it discusses, has never been published in this country. Within a few months, however, we are happy to say that his pen has again been called into exercise for the benefit of the public; and we have the result of the effort in his last work entitled, "*The Anxious Inquirer after Salvation directed and encouraged*;"—a work to which the author was admirably fitted by the general structure of his mind, by his intimate knowledge of God's word, and of the human heart, and especially by the particular attention he has devoted to what may be called the theory of experimental religion, and the vigorous and continued efforts which he has put forth, within the last few years, to rouse the British churches to a higher tone of feeling and action. The work is what might have been expected from one who had given to the subject of it much deep and laborious thought, and whose heart was deeply imbued with a sense of its vast importance, and whose grand object was to make an appeal to the understanding, the conscience, the whole moral man, which, by God's blessing, may be instrumental in saving souls from death and hiding a multitude of sins. After a pertinent introduction, in which he suggests several directions for the profitable reading of the work, the author proceeds to show the reasonableness and necessity of an earnest solicitude on the great subject of salvation; then illustrates the immense importance of retaining and deepening religious impressions; urges the necessity of gaining scriptural knowledge, and clear views of divine truth; exhibits the nature and importance of repentance of sin, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; cautions the inquirer against the mistakes into which he is in danger of falling, and against the needless perplexities to which he is in danger of yielding, and against the various discouragements which meet him at the very beginning of his course, and against certain practical errors which will be likely to retard his progress, and if he actually becomes a true Christian, to render his Christian character sickly and inefficient; and finally suggests the most animating considerations to persevere in seeking the Lord until he is really found. All these various topics (and they fairly

cover the whole ground) are treated with great judiciousness and discrimination, and with that deep and earnest feeling which constitutes so prominent a characteristic of the author's productions. Without disparaging other similar works, we know of no manual of the kind which seems to us so well adapted to its purpose; no one which a Christian minister might with so much confidence circulate in his congregation during a season of the uncommon outpouring of the Holy Spirit. We most cordially welcome this little work from the other side of the ocean, as a highly important auxiliary to the cause of evangelical religion in this country; and we cannot doubt while such works are sent forth from the British press, and such men are giving the whole vigour of their faculties and affections to the promotion of a sound and vigorous piety in the British nation, that the cause of pure religion is destined to advance more and more rapidly among them, until that land so justly dear to every Christian's heart, and especially dear to us, as the land of our father's sepulchres, shall every where exhibit tokens of the divine presence, and be overspread with the brightness of the divine glory.

Having thus briefly stated our general views of the several works of Mr. James, which have come under our notice, it only remains that we endeavour, in a few remarks, to illustrate their peculiar adaptation to the circumstances of the present age, and especially of our own country.

We may remark, then, in the first place, that one of the most prominent features in the present condition of the American Church, is to be found in its *revivals of religion*; and there are at least two of Mr. James' publications, which bear upon such a state of things with great felicity and effect; and which, moreover, are adapted to counteract certain evils by which the purity of our revivals have been marred, and their fruits in many instances blasted. No one, with the Bible in his hand, can question that it is the duty of every sinner instantly to exercise repentance towards God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; and that treatment of an awakened sinner is bad which takes for granted that his only duty is to put himself in the attitude of waiting for God's Spirit, without bringing his own faculties vigorously to the great work of his salvation. But the evil which has more commonly prevailed in connexion with our revivals, especially in latter years, has been

that of withholding from the inquiring sinner a suitable degree of instruction ; it has sometimes happened that almost all that has been said to him by his spiritual guide, has been comprised in the frequent and urgent repetition of the single word, "repent," or "submit," in connexion with a bold denunciation of the terrors of God's wrath upon the impenitent and rebellious. When the individual to be addressed has been properly instructed in respect to the great truths of the Gospel, there is of course less need of dwelling upon those truths in their various bearings and applications, than in a case in which the sinner has lived in profound ignorance of them all ; though it is proper in *any* case to hold them up before the mind in all their fulness, and greatness, and power ; but it is to be remembered, that in the great majority of cases in which sinners are awakened, they are in a great degree ignorant of those very truths, in the use of which the Holy Spirit operates in the renovation of the soul ; and unless these truths are by some means brought in contact with their understandings, it were in vain to expect that they should be the subjects of a sound conversion. They must not only be made to feel the obligation to repent, but they must also be brought to view Christ as he is seen in the Gospel, and feel the constraining influence of his love ; to view God as invested not only with the majesty of a lawgiver, but with the condescension of a Redeemer, before they will ever exercise that godly sorrow for sin which is unto life. It is, no doubt, owing in a great degree to the fact, that the instruction which has been communicated to awakened sinners, has often been miserably defective, and that, instead of having the great truths of the Gospel distinctly presented before them, in connexion with the immutable obligations of the law, their attention has been confined to a few phrases of which they have very imperfectly understood the meaning ; it is owing, no doubt, much to this mode of procedure, that the religion of so many of the hopeful subjects of our revivals has proved like the early dew and the morning cloud.

Now we know of no work better adapted to counteract this evil in the experience of an awakened sinner, than "*The Anxious Inquirer directed and encouraged.*" With the exception of a single expression or two, in which the author seems to us to have inadvertently confounded a newly awakened state, with a truly gracious state, (and the effect

of this is sufficiently counteracted by the general tenour of his work,) we see nothing which has the least tendency to quiet the sinner's conscience, so long as he remains unreconciled to God, or to justify the impression that there is not a distinct and mighty change to be performed upon the soul, for which conviction of sin is only the preparation. The awakened sinner who will attentively read this book, and be guided by its instructions, will be in little danger of losing his serious impressions on the one hand, or of gaining false peace to his soul on the other. He will find every thing to deepen the impressions of his guilt and crime, every thing to fasten his eye upon the atoning blood of Christ. Let this work be extensively circulated in revivals of religion, as we have no doubt it is destined to be, and much is to be hoped from its influence in preventing spurious conversions, and in assisting to lay the foundation of a consistent and holy life.

Another evil in connexion with many of our revivals, has been found in the peculiar character which has been exhibited by many of their hopeful subjects. On the one hand, whose heart has not bled at seeing persons who have promised much at the time of joining the church, and have been hailed by their brethren as most important coadjutors in the work of the Lord, who have gradually declined in circumspection and consistency, in efficiency and zeal, until they hang as a dead weight upon the church with which they are connected? The vows which they have taken upon themselves seem to pass for nothing; their duties to the church, and their duties to the world, are alike neglected; and the church mourn, and the world triumph, in view of their lamentable declension. On the other hand, it has been painfully common, especially within the last few years, for persons to bring with them into the church a restless spirit of insubordination; a zeal that is not according to knowledge; a willingness, and more than that, a determination to controul by a sort of violent action the movements of the whole body. This has happened, especially in respect to many young men, whose constitutional ardour and indiscretion, aided by what has looked very much like spiritual pride, have originated distractions and divisions, which may not improbably cost the church years of afflictions, and themselves, if they recover a sober mind, years of self-reproval and regret. Their faults have been not so

much that they have been too active, as that they have not been active in the right way; they have been arrogant when they should have been modest; have set themselves up for teachers when they ought to have taken the attitude of learners; and, as a natural consequence, have injured their character and impaired their usefulness.

"*The Church Member's Guide*," in its whole spirit and tendency, is opposed to both the errors which we have here noticed. It shows the church member that he has most important duties to perform, and points out to him what these duties are, and presents before him the most animating encouragements to the discharge of them. Here he is taught that a profession of religion involves obligations which can never be set aside; that he is sacredly bound always to be about his Master's business; that the whole vigour of his faculties is to be brought into exercise in dependence on the higher agency of the Holy Ghost; and that he cannot be a slothful member of the church, but at the peril of bringing upon himself a heavy curse. At the same time, he is also taught the importance of keeping within his own sphere; of labouring prudently, and modestly, and humbly, as well as of doing whatsoever his hand findeth to do with his might. Whoever will study this little work till he has become well acquainted with all its parts, and will, at the same time, scrupulously conform his conduct to the rules which it prescribes, will be at once an intelligent, active, and discreet member of the church; neither setting on fire the course of nature by false zeal, nor creating by his coldness an atmosphere around him, in which the warm-hearted Christian cannot breathe with freedom, and in which the careless sinner finds his appropriate element. We would earnestly recommend to every young professor to make himself early acquainted with this book, and to use it as his own "guide" in the various duties which his relation to the church devolves upon him. If every pastor whose labours are blessed to the revival of religion, were to recommend this work to the attention of all who join the communion of the church, there is reason to believe that he would often save himself, and the church, and the individuals concerned, much occasion for humiliation and regret.

Another evil in the religious state of our country, which Mr. James' works seem happily adapted to correct, is the disposition which extensively prevails to bestow a dispro-

portionate attention upon some duties, to the almost entire neglect of others;—in other words, it is what we would call a partial religion. To illustrate what we mean—there is a set of men who devote themselves almost exclusively to revivals of religion, and who seem to imagine that little good is accomplished except in immediate efforts for the conversion of sinners; and not unfrequently these individuals are exceedingly inattentive to many of their relative duties, neglecting, it may be, to make suitable provision for their families, and even treating the religious education of their children, as if it were quite a secondary matter. And there is another class who give nearly their whole time and influence to the great benevolent objects of the day; and in their zeal to carry the Gospel abroad to the ends of the earth, overlook perhaps the fact that they have heathen in their immediate neighbourhood, or that they have children who are in danger of being ruined through the influence of temptation, or even that the principle of spiritual life in their own souls must be sustained and cherished by the diligent and faithful use of the means of grace. We too commonly find Christians of the present day, whose characters are developed in bad proportions, and whose usefulness is greatly abridged by their apparent indifference to many important parts of Christian duty, while yet in other respects they may be zealous almost to a fault. Several of the works of our respected author are directly adapted to meet this peculiar feature in our religious character. We may instance particularly, "*The Church Members' Guide*," and "*The Family Monitor*," in which the various social and domestic duties of the Christian are urged in all their importance, and it is most clearly shown that no degree of spiritual feeling on the one hand, or of public action on the other, can in any degree atone for the neglect of them. Indeed the tendency of these publications is pre-eminently to form a consistent religious character; to lead to the cultivation of *every* Christian grace, and to the discharge of *every* Christian duty, so that the character shall be an exact counterpart of *all* the doctrines and precepts of the Gospel.

There is also an *inconstancy* belonging to the religious character of our country—something like a fever and ague—which needs much to be corrected, and to which Mr. James' writings are fitted to be an antidote. It is so in respect to churches. At one time the Holy Spirit seems to be

operating with mighty power, and Christians are awake to a sense of their obligations, and the world seems to lose its hold, in a degree, upon the hearts of men, and God's living truth is felt upon many a conscience in all its supremacy and majesty, and if we were to judge from what appears, we should suppose that the whole surrounding community would soon be converted; but at another and no very distant period, we find that the voice of prayer and thanksgiving, of anxious inquiry, and ingenuous contrition, and humble hope, is hushed, and the world has gained its accustomed ascendancy in the hearts of men, and Christians are slumbering over their obligations, and sinners slumbering over their danger, as securely as ever. But a little while since, when we inquired in respect to the spiritual state of the church, we were told that God was there, by the most marked tokens of his grace; but when we inquire now, we get the painful answer, that all is still in the valley of vision around, and no breath from on high seems to be coming over it. We do not mean to intimate that every revival is followed by such a state of declension, or at least, by so great a degree of it: but we are sure that it cannot be a matter of doubt with any body who has been accustomed to observe the religious condition of our country, that there is a painful degree of instability attending it; and that though great good is often accomplished in a short period, yet Christians too often soon become weary of well doing, and by their own neglect of duty, are left for a long time to spiritual barrenness and insensibility.

The spirit of all these publications is the spirit not only of an active, but an enduring and growing piety. The great object at which they seem to aim is, to induce every Christian to discharge every duty at the right time and in the proper place; and this surely is the most effectual guard against a fickle and inconstant religion. He who does this, cannot fail to be in the fear of God all the day long, and to let his light shine before men in every variety of circumstances. If all our churches were to do this, we might reasonably expect to be blessed with an uninterrupted revival; and instead of having occasion to mourn over protracted seasons of religious indifference, every month and every week would yield its number of converts, and would furnish fresh reason to the Christian gratefully to exclaim, "What hath God wrought!"

Finally: These publications are eminently adapted to the state of the times, as they are peculiarly fitted to *form, after the scriptural model, the character of the young*. It is not easy adequately to estimate the importance of proper moral and religious culture, as it respects the rising generation. There is every thing in the aspect of Providence to indicate, that we are on the eve of changes which are to have a most important influence on the moral renovation of the world; and that the degree of rapidity with which this great work is to advance, must depend much on the next succeeding generation. In a little while the great moral and benevolent machinery of the age must pass into the hands of those who are now passing through the stages of childhood and youth:—who then can estimate the importance of the character which they form, in view of the fact they are so soon to become the earthly guardians of all the great and holy interests of the church, as well as to guide and control the various movements of civil society. The system of means by which the world is to be evangelized is yet but partially arranged; and it will devolve upon our children in a great measure to perfect that which we have only begun; to devise new methods of benevolent action, and to give greater harmony and efficiency to those already in existence. The destiny of our own country especially, both political and moral, is deeply involved in the character of the generation that is immediately to succeed us; for as our population is so rapidly extending, nothing but a most efficient moral influence can keep us from sinking under our own weight; and where shall we look for such an influence a few years hence, if it be not from those who are now in the morning of life? We know of no works better fitted to imbue the minds of the young with a proper regard for religion, than those which have been under review in this article; for while they contain the most important truth, and much of it peculiarly adapted to the period of youth, they are written in a style strongly marked by vivacity and beauty. We cordially commend them to the attention of this interesting class of readers, not doubting that in proportion as they are read, and pondered, and reduced to practice, our youth will acquire dignity and elevation of character, and our country and the world have occasion to hail them as a generation of benefactors.