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ART. I.—RITES AND WORSHIP OF THE EARLY CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

*From the German of Neander\*.*

As the idea of the priesthood of all Christians, became more and more superseded by the notion of a class of persons peculiarly consecrated to God, and set apart for divine service; in the same proportion, the original relation of united Christian worship to entire Christian life—a relation grounded in the very essence of the system—became more and more obscure. It was forgotten, that the divine worship of believers is confined to no certain places, times, or actions, but embraces the whole of a life consecrated to God. Distinguished theologians, however, such as Chrysostom and Augustin, acknowledged that vital Christianity could proceed only from that

\* This article consists of a translation from the last volume of the Ecclesiastical History of Neander. The reader will bear in mind that all the statements which it contains relate exclusively to the period between A. D. 312, and A. D. 590; the *second period*, according to the division of this historian. It falls, therefore, within that part of the work which has not yet appeared in English; for the translation by Rose included the history of the first period only. The extract here given will probably be interesting, both as the specimen of a work which is attracting great attention in Europe, and as containing a body of instructive matter upon a very important branch of the subject.

[*Ed. Bib. Rep. & Theol. Rev.*]

not only to recommend this little volume to every parent and teacher, in all the confidence of our conviction, that it is well worthy of a purchase and a perusal—yes, of oft repeated, perusal—but also to suggest to every clerical reader, whether, if his judgment coincide with ours, he might not extensively serve the cause of Christian education, and consequently of the world's conversion, by recommending it from the pulpit, as well as in private, to the people of his charge.

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#### ART. VI.—GOD HIMSELF THE ULTIMATE END OF ALL THINGS.

IT is natural to inquire, while surveying the extended works of God, *What is the ultimate end of this great and complicated system?* Some parts of it, we can easily see, were formed for others; objects that are small and insignificant, for those that are greater and more important; and again, these for others greater and more important still. The pebble and the drop were made to constitute the mountain and the river; and the mountains and the rivers to adorn and embellish the face of nature, and in a thousand ways, to minister to the wants of those who dwell on the earth. The solid earth, with all its immense quantities of matter, its diversified surface, its fertile soil, its rapid motions, its elastic atmosphere, was evidently intended to be the habitable abode of men. The extended ocean, with all its mighty expanse and unmeasured depth of waters, while it is the grand reservoir of nature, and the source of evaporation, perpetually enriching the earth with fertility and verdure, every where distributes its watery treasures for the sustenance and benefit of the numerous tribes of animated and intelligent existence. If we extend our views to the solar system, or from the solar system to the starry heavens, in these trackless regions we behold an assemblage of resplendent orbs, spacious perhaps as the sun of our own system, and all subserving the interests of unnumbered worlds, not improbably invested, like our own, with intelligence and immortality. Matter, in all its variety and magnificence, we see, is made for mind, and one portion of this great and complicated system for another.

What then is the ultimate end of *all things*? The lights of unaided reason are far from fitting us to solve this high problem; and yet, so far as we are enabled to follow them, they conduct us to the same conclusion to which we are conducted by a supernatural revelation, when it so happily and explicitly instructs us, that “The Lord hath made *all things* for *himself*.”

When we say that God acts for the purpose of displaying abroad the perfections of his nature before the intelligent creation—when we say that God made all things for himself, we mean, that his supreme end, “is his own glory, or the most perfect gratification of his infinitely benevolent mind.” The word *glory*, when applied to God, sometimes denotes the inherent and full perfection of the divine nature, and sometimes the manifestation of the divine nature in creation, providence, and grace. There is a difference between the intrinsic and the manifested excellence of the Godhead. By his intrinsic excellence, is meant his essential perfections; by his manifested excellence, is meant his essential perfections exhibited to himself and the created universe. There is a richness, a fulness of perfection which constitutes his essential glory; and there is a diffusion, a resplendency in his perfections which, if I may so speak, reflects the Deity to himself and the universe; which casts its light through all worlds, and constitutes his manifested glory. The chief excellence of God consists in his goodness. Infinite amiableness and beauty are treasured up in his perfections, because the basis of them is the most pure, permanent, universal, and perfect goodness.

*This* is the *glory* of his nature. But the intrinsic, or essential goodness of God does not admit of increase or diminution. God cannot possess more essential goodness than he does possess; and, therefore, cannot be made essentially more glorious than he is. When, therefore, we speak of God’s being glorified, or of the advancement and promotion of his glory, we speak of the augmentation of his manifested excellence—of the expression, or gratification of his infinite goodness, in some of its forms and modifications. It is not incompatible with his immutability, that the exhibition he makes of his nature, should be capable of continual growth and enlargement, and that his manifested excellence should receive fresh accessions, and be continually growing more extended and more refulgent. For all that we know, the manifested glory of God is susceptible of augmentation that is perpetually pro-

gressive. In the same proportion in which the scene opens, will the true character of God be unfolded, and his perfect goodness made known. And as the drama draws to a close, and the catastrophe of the mighty plot begins to be developed, at every step of this progressive disclosure will the heart of God be acted out, the name of God magnified, the glory of God displayed abroad, and the divine goodness infinitely and forever exalted and gratified. This is what we mean when we say, that the glory of God is the ultimate end of all his conduct, and that he made all things for himself. It was that he might manifest the perfections of his nature, and thus exalt and gratify his infinite goodness.

*This is God's ultimate end.* This is the end to which all other ends are subordinate and subservient. Jehovah, the king of Israel, is "the first and the last;" he is "Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending;" the first cause and the last, or supreme end of all things. "Of him, and to him, and through him are all things." "All things that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, principalities, and powers, all were created by him and for him. God himself often declares in his word, that he will do, or refrain from doing, "for his own sake,"—for "his name's sake,"—"for his praise,"—"for his glory,"—and, that "in all things he may be glorified." What means the sublime declaration in the Apocalypse? "And the four beasts rest not day nor night, saying, holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come. And when those beasts give glory, and honour, and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth forever and ever, the four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power; *for thou hast created all things, and for THY PLEASURE they are, and were created.*"

Whom could God ultimately regard, in the creation of all things, except himself? Before the creation there was none other in existence but God. The motives to create must of necessity be within himself. Is it said, that future existence itself may be an end in proposing and causing it to exist? Is it said, that the excellence of his work was an inducement to create?

But for what purpose did God propose happiness? Did he

act without a motive? Or was it to express and gratify his own perfect goodness? Was it his love of happiness, his delight in happiness, that induced the purpose and the wish?

The divine glory deserves the most regard. Not only must the infinite and eternal Creator have had some end in view in the creation, but one that justifies the expressions of his omnipotence, and that is worthy of the greatest and best Being in the universe. We can conceive of many ends that might have presented themselves to his mind, but we can conceive of no supreme end short of himself, without derogating from his perfect excellence. Universal creation is but a point compared with God. Language and figures, and comparisons, are lost in the contemplation of his being and nature. The material and intellectual universe is but a faint adumbration of what God himself is, and presents a mere shadow, an emblem of his infinite perfections. All nations, all worlds, are but a "drop of the bucket," compared with him, and no more than the small vapour to the immense ocean. Immeasurable glories and blessedness belong to Him who fills immensity. The glory of the infinite God, therefore, deserves the highest regard. And, with reverence be it spoken, it became him to make this his design, as really as it becomes him to give the preference to an archangel above an insect.

The use which God actually makes of his creation, shows what end it was intended to answer. It subserves the end for which it was originally intended. And what do the Scriptures and facts declare this to be? Obviously, not the happiness of all God's creatures; for they are not all happy. Human misery stares us in the face wherever we turn our eyes. In eternity, there are, and will be greater and deeper miseries than are found in time. So that if the happiness of all God's creatures be the ultimate end of creation, most certainly the divine purpose is defeated. But facts and the Bible unite in declaring, that the use God makes of his universe is the promotion and advancement of his own glory. When we survey the works of creation, to what do we see them so really and so much subservient, as the glory of the Creator? "All thy works *praise thee*." "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory." If we survey the works of Providence, what do they illustrate so clearly, as the supremacy, wisdom, goodness, power, and presence of the Almighty and efficient Ruler? What grand and deep impression do they produce on the mind, if not this, that they are



full of God?—that by them his name is “declared throughout all the earth”—and that through them men “may know that he is the Lord?” It will not be doubted that the glory of God is the great end of the work of redemption. Angels, when they announced it, sang “Glory to God in the highest!” The Redeemer, when he achieved it, prayed “Father glorify thy name!” All its promises are “yea and amen to the glory of God, by Jesus Christ.” The graces, and hopes, and joys it imparts to the saints, are to “make known the riches of his glory.” And the final and triumphant song it inspires in the heavenly world, is “unto to him be glory!” Not only is the glory of God the ultimate end of all his goodness and mercy to the saints, but of all his justice and indignation to the ungodly. “The wrath of man shall praise the Lord.” Alleluias to God and the Lamb shall ascend, when the smoke of the torments of the damned go up for ever and ever. And the close of this terrestrial scene shall declare and confirm the truth we are enforcing with a deep and memorable emphasis. A voice from heaven shall then be heard, saying, “It is done; I am Alpha and Omega!” When the great design shall be consummated, and creation, providence, and redemption shall have been brought to their final issue, and the Judge shall have pronounced the final sentence, then shall this redeeming God and King “deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father, and GOD SHALL BE ALL IN ALL;” and this surrender shall eternally proclaim to the universe, that “God made all things for himself.” God shall be all in all. God shall be infinitely and forever glorified.

But it may not be amiss to occupy a few pages in VINDICATING THE CONDUCT OF GOD IN THUS MAKING HIMSELF HIS LAST END. There is nothing which the Scriptures represent as more essential to enlarged and consistent views of truth, as well as to the great interests of vital piety, than some just conceptions of this part of our subject. There is nothing of which God himself is so jealous, nothing he regards so deeply as his own glory. This he is immutably resolved to secure and advance, and by all means, and at every step of its development, to make men see. He “will not give his glory to another.” His glory is with him, a consideration of paramount influence, in every condition and circumstance, and in all worlds. It is second to nothing which the Infinite Mind itself has ever conceived. Holy beings in heaven and on earth have no larger wish, no greater desire, than to behold greater and brighter exhibitions of the divine excellence.

It is of the *highest importance in itself*, that God should appear in the perfect exercise and exhibition of his divine excellence. The importance of this exhibition depends on the intrinsic and manifold perfections of the divine nature. If there were no excellence in the Deity, we should be far from considering it desirable that his true character should appear; much less should we desire that the full and complete exhibition and gratification of it should be the ultimate end of all that he does. In itself considered, no matter how long, or how impenetrably, intrinsic turpitude of character lies concealed; it is deformed and disgusting to look at; it makes no one the better or happier for being familiar with it; but the more fully, the more impressively intrinsic excellence is disclosed, the deeper is the conviction of its reality and loveliness, and the more sublime and beautiful the survey and inspection of its glories. Now, it is because God is infinitely great and good, that it is desirable to "see him as he is." That immensity and majesty, that power and wisdom, that supremacy and immutability, that pure, perfect, and universal goodness, which diffuse their energy into all the divine plans, and spread such beauty and glory over all the divine works and conduct, are in him excellencies of the highest kind, and immeasurable in degree. We do not appreciate the exhibition of the divine excellence, because we have such low and grovelling thoughts of God. Were this immensely great and infinitely glorious Being always viewed as he is, did we see him to be "the first fair and the first good," were we always possessed of just and comprehenssve conceptions of his glory, we should entertain no doubt, that the reflection of this excellence, the progressive diffusion of these concentrated rays, is the highest and best end which the Supreme Intelligence could propose to himself in all his works. The principle on which we affirm this, is inwoven with all our common sense and moral calculations. Every man regrets, and deems it an unhappiness, when a measure of mere human excellence is hid from the public eye. When virtue languishes in solitude, when genius withers in retirement, when the heavy hand of external discouragement or internal depression bears down the rising efforts of intellectual or moral greatness, what benevolent mind does not reflect upon such calamity with pain? And if in proportion to the degree of excellence is the importance that it should be unfolded, beyond conception important is it that the matchless, manifold, infinite, and eternal excellence of the Deity should

appear, and be displayed abroad in all its glory. If the king, eternal, immortal, and invisible, possesses, not the resemblance and image, but "the living features" of perfection, who feels it not to be important that the light of his fair countenance should be lifted upon the universe he has made, and that every subject of his empire should be constrained to see, that "none in heaven can be compared unto the Lord, and none among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the Lord?" Not only is there in this disclosure ineffable loveliness and beauty, but there is equity both to himself and his creatures. If he is a holy God, and there is beauty in his holiness, then ought it to appear that he is holy and not sinful. If he is just, and there are beauties and amiableness in his justice, then is it desirable and important that his justice should appear, and be magnified; and that he should forever be acquitted of the imputation of cruelty, caprice, and injustice. If he is wise, and powerful, and good, then is it infinitely desirable that these perfections of his nature should be acted out, and he exalted and gratified; and that no order of beings should ever call in question the wisdom, efficacy, or benevolence of his administrations. If he is gracious and merciful, then ought all men to see "what is the fellowship of the mystery which from the beginning of the world, hath been *hid in God*, who created all things by Jesus Christ, to the intent that now unto principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known through the Church, his manifold glory." If he is supreme, then is it desirable that his supremacy should appear, and that all should know, that he "does his pleasure in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth." And if he is in every view a being of faultless, unequalled perfection, and that every intellectual and moral excellence adorns his nature, and are the habitation and glory of his throne, then is it of the highest importance that his unblemished glory should shine forth, and that nothing mar its unrivalled beauty. There was an emphasis in the inquiry of Moses, that sinks into the soul of every godly man and every bending seraph, "What will become of thy great name?" We know that among fallen spirits, and in this world of ours that lieth in wickedness, the divine character has been subjected to the foulest stains, his government reproached, and his designs defamed; and unless his excellence *appear* in cloudless glory, dissipating the obscurity in which it has been enveloped by the ignorance, misconception, and wickedness of creatures, the stain can



never be wiped away. God *must* be glorified. Every supposed blemish must be removed by the exhibition of himself. Every murmur against him must die away. "Every mouth must be stopped." And nothing short of the actual development of the divine nature can attain this end. All that God is, and all that he does, must "come to the light," that it may be approved and applauded by ten thousand tongues, and ten thousand times ten thousand consciences, and that their approbation and their plaudits may be eternal.

It is also through the bright exhibitions of his own glory, that the God of love designs to *secure and perpetuate the perfect and progressive holiness of unnumbered multitudes of his creatures*. Some of the creatures of God were created holy, and have maintained their primeval integrity, and will maintain it for ever. Some were created holy, and fell from their primitive rectitude, and have given birth to a race of beings, fallen like themselves. Of these, a great multitude are recovered from their apostacy, and will continue steadfast in their obedience without end. And it is obvious to remark, that whether true holiness, or moral rectitude, is found among angels or men, it is advanced and perpetuated by the same means. Wherever it is found, it consists in holy love, and primarily, in love to the adorable and ever blessed God. "Love is the fulfilling of the law." "He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him." He that "loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is love." Now it accords with the Scriptures, and all the experience of good men that the love of God exists and is sustained through the knowledge of God. The Divine Spirit is, indeed, the immediate and only cause and author of this heavenly disposition; but the knowledge of God is the great instrument of it. This is the aliment of all healthful, moral existence. Wherever sinful beings are made holy, it is by becoming acquainted with God. When God renews the hearts of the sons of men, and sheds abroad his love in them, they are illumined from above, and enabled to discern the supreme excellence and glory of the divine character. "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shines in their hearts, to give them the light of the knowledge of *his glory*, in the face of Jesus Christ." And wherever holy beings see and learn most of God, they become most holy. Holy affections delight in nothing but a holy object, and the most holy affections delight in nothing so much as the most holy. The highest holiness in creatures

can be found only where God is best known, and loved perfectly. Upon nothing does their holiness so much depend, as the knowledge of God. It is possible for us to conceive of a *sinless* being, who knows nothing except his obligations to his fellow creatures; but it would be a rectitude without a name—an anomaly in the moral universe—a rectitude that falls far below the actual rectitude, the real moral elevation of all holy creatures. We do not see how it is possible there should be any more conformity to God, than there is knowledge of his true character. Other things being equal, the reason why one good man is more holy than another, is that he possesses more clear and comprehensive views of God. One reason why Moses, and David, and Paul were so much more holy than the mass of good men, is that they possessed such high and extended views of God. It is necessary, therefore, to the existence of holiness in the world, and its advancement and perpetuity, and especially its strength and vividness, that there should be a clear development of the divine character, and that the great God should be exalted and glorified. It is worthy of God as the friend and patron of holiness, to select as the ultimate end of all he does, the most perfect exhibition of his own nature. This he must do, to be loved, admired, and adored to the extent and degree in which holy beings will admire and adore his entire excellence. It is when “with *unveiled face*, they behold as in a glass, the *glory of the Lord*, that they are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” Take away from the bosom of the holy, on earth or in heaven, those strong affections which arise from their perception of the glory of the divine nature, and you abate the fervour and intenseness of their piety. You starve their graces, and well nigh transform their character. It is indispensable to the highest and best state of religious affection, that the glory of God, progressively, and in all its full-orbed splendour, should shine upon the world. He made this lower world to unfold the greatness and goodness of his character, and because his greatness and goodness are and will be here so wonderfully unfolded, and the whole earth become full of his glory, it is the school of morals and piety, where the first and the last lesson is God himself, and where, by becoming acquainted with God, rational and immortal beings are trained up for perfect holiness and an eternal heaven.

This leads us to remark, that the propriety of God’s mak-

ing himself his ultimate end, appears more clearly from the fact, that *by the manifestation of his glory, the greatest aggregate of happiness is secured to intelligent beings.* The import of this remark will not, we think, be misunderstood. God is the first cause. All existence, all happiness flows from him; and flows only by the exhibition of his own glory. Without some *expression* of the divine perfections, neither created happiness, nor creatures would have had a being. There would have been nothing in existence, beside God, and nothing beside himself to be happy. There would have been no effort of his power; no results of his wisdom; no effects from his benovolence; but his inert perfections would have been buried in the retirement of eternity, and have slept for ever in the recesses of his own infinite mind. Literally, therefore, does all created happiness depend upon the manifested excellence of the Deity. Nor is it less certain that the amount of created good is advanced by the continued and increased exhibition of the divine excellence. Had the natural and moral perfections of the Deity ceased to act, and to be illustrated immediately after the creation, or immediately after the deluge, or immediately after the death of Jesus Christ, who does not see, that the aggregate of created happiness would have suffered a lamented diminution? Since no created happiness could originally have existed without some manifestation of the divine nature, so none would have continued to exist. The exhibition of the divine glory is not less essential to the increase and perpetuity, than to the original existence of created good. But it is not necessary to suppose an actual cessation in the diversified exhibitions of the Deity. Had there been a partial intermission, suspension, or limitation in the exhibition of the divine excellence, the effect, though less serious, would have been no less perceptible. In proportion to the limit imposed on the illustration, would have been the diminution in created happiness. Had there been fewer and less impressive exhibitions of the divine power, there had been fewer and less magnificent and less exalted beings and objects created and upheld and governed by the divine hand. Had there been fewer and less impressive exhibitions of the divine wisdom, there had been, in the vast and complicated system of God's operations, an end less benevolent than that which has been selected, and means less admirably adapted to accomplish it. Had there been fewer and less impressive exhibitions of the divine mercy, it had been

purchased at a cheaper rate, bestowed on fewer sinners, and those less ill-deserving, and that less freely. Had there been fewer and less impressive exhibitions of the divine justice, there had been fewer monuments of his holy displeasure against sin, and those less awful and glorious; and, consequently, a diminished confidence in God, as the moral governor of the holy and unholy. Had there been fewer and less impressive exhibitions of the divine supremacy, there had been less visible superiority and inferiority among all God's creatures, and less diversity of moral character and final allotment throughout the universe. But if the numerous and magnificent objects of creative power and directive superintendence—if the glorious end of the divine administrations, together with the wonderful adaptation of means to accomplish it—if the stupendous sacrifice made for the redemption of fallen man, the multitudes which no man can number, and those the chief of sinners, ransomed by grace unutterably rich and free—if the eternal monuments of Jehovah's displeasure against his incorrigible enemies, and the security of his government over a world of rational and accountable agents—if the wide and permanent diversity of character and condition in the present world and the world to come—if these, however fraught with evil in some of their private relations, are, on the whole, a good, and in their combination and contrast, in their wide connections and eternal consequences, subserve the general welfare; then the conclusion is inevitable, that the manifestation of the divine glory is indispensable to the highest aggregate of created happiness. And that they are a good, will not be questioned by any who confide in the absolute perfection of the Deity. He cannot be a perfect being if the exhibition of his true character results in any thing short of the highest good. We have no other idea of imperfection than that it is in its own nature bad, and that its tendency is on the whole to produce evil. But we do not thus charge God foolishly. If "God only wise" cannot err, if the attributes of his nature are in no way imperfect, then whatever evils may be incidental to their development, it cannot be otherwise than that in the final issue they should secure the greatest good.

In perfect accordance with these remarks, the experience of good men attests the fact, that the source and fullness of created good is the knowledge and enjoyment of God. There is something in the divine nature, not merely for the employment of our intellectual powers, but for the gratification of our



most exalted and spiritual affections. Whatever brings God to the view of a holy mind never fails to increase its joy. The happiest moment of the Christian's existence is when he enjoys the most enlarged and most impressive views of God, and dwells with adoring wonder on his boundless and unsearchable perfections. To enjoy this felicity was the desire of Moses when he said, "I beseech thee show me thy glory:" this was the desire of Job when he said, "Oh that I knew where I might find him:" of David when he prayed, "Lord lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon me;" and when he says, "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, and behold the *beauty* of the Lord:" and again, when he declares, "My soul thirsteth for thee, to see thy power and *thy glory*, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary." When you read the lives of such men as Flavel and Owen, Baxter and Edwards, Tennent and Brainerd, you cannot fail to discover that the source of their highest blessedness, their most enduring comforts, their most enraptured joys, was enlarged views of the divine character and glory. Let God be brought into view, and a holy mind will be happy; let God be withdrawn, and it will be miserable. His ineffable glory *was* once withdrawn from the holiest created mind in the universe, and the man Christ Jesus exclaimed, in agony inexpressible, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Some of our readers can accord with the spirit of these remarks, and have, no doubt, sensibly felt that nothing could make them miserable, while the glory of the divine character beamed around them.

But who, in this dark world, is fitted to appreciate the blessedness resulting from the more illustrious and transforming manifestations of the divine beauty? Eye hath not seen them, nor have they entered into the heart of man. "It may not be easy for us," says the eloquent Chalmers, "with all our imperfection, to sympathize with the rapture, the ecstasy of holy beings in their survey of the divine perfections; but it is this that is the constant and essential principle of all their enjoyment, the never-failing source of their delighted admiration." Had God withheld the manifestations of his entire excellence from angels, we do not say they would have been miserable, but we do say, they would not have been gratified. We do not say their bosoms would not have heaved with joy, but never would they have swelled with the "joy that is un-



speakable and full of glory," and never would they have known that "exceeding and eternal weight of glory," which now they know. Had it pleased the Eternal to shed on them only a few broken and refracted rays of his divinity, their joys might indeed have beamed with bright effulgence, but they would have enkindled only the glimmerings of that flame, which now glows in their bosoms with unutterable fervour, and which emanates from the fulness of the Creator's glory. It is a thought very dear to us, that the glory of God and the good of the universe cannot be separated. When the glorious Being, whose name is love, acts for his own glory he acts for the good of his creatures. His goodness cannot be gratified without promoting the highest good of the universe. Though he cannot make all his creatures happy consistently with the highest good, his own glory requires him to make them as happy as he can consistently make them. The only source of blessedness, therefore, that is commensurate with the ever-varying desires and utmost grasp of the immortal mind is found in God, and found in him from the exhibition of his excellent glory. Here are rich and endless disclosures; here is never-ceasing variety; here are glories which may be contemplated with new and ever-fresh delight, the longer and the brighter they are spread before the eye.

There is another thought which we deem of some consequence in this illustration. We may not think the Infinite One "altogether such an one as ourselves," nor would we speak of him with uncircumcised lips. "Who, by searching, can find out God? Who can find out the Almighty to perfection?" The thought we wish to be considered is this: *The perfect exhibition of the divine glory is essential to the happiness of God himself.* The Scriptures represent God as perfectly happy. They speak of him, as "God over all, blessed forever," and as the "blessed and only Potentate." But in what does the blessedness of God consist? Does it not result from the pure and perfect benevolence of his character, which he himself sees and appreciates, and which gives infinite pleasure to his own holy mind? Would God be happy, and could he contemplate his nature with self-approbation and complacency, if he possessed a selfish and malevolent spirit? Does not his blessedness also result from the expression of his perfect benevolence in the works of creation, providence, and grace, by which he diffuses so much happiness among his creatures? Is it not thus that his benevolence is gratified, and

that he makes himself happy? And does not his blessedness also result from beholding the consequences and effects of his communicative goodness, wherever they are diffused and enjoyed? With infinite delight does he behold all the fruits of his pure and perfect goodness. "The Lord shall rejoice in his works." He "rejoices over them with joy;" he "joys over them with singing;" he "rests in his love." Is it too much to say, that although God is a pure and perfect Spirit, eternal, unchangeable, infinite in his being, power, wisdom, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth, that his blessedness results from the same sources which communicate happiness to the minds of all holy creatures, and differs from theirs—this is indeed a mighty difference—only as it is an independent blessedness; as it is without alloy, without interruption; without limits, and without end; or in other words, only as *he* differs from *them*. Created minds are happy in the perfect gratification of all their holy desires. And God is happy in the perfect gratification of all his desires. And since he has no desires that are unholy, all are perfectly gratified; and in this consists his perfect and immutable blessedness.

It is sometimes objected to this view of the divine blessedness, that God could not have been eternally happy. But the objection is more specious than valid. We have no doubt God was originally and eternally happy, and that his happiness always has been unmixed and uninterrupted. But why is he thus blessed? Most certainly, not independently of himself; not independently of his own desires, and of his purposes to gratify them. He was from eternity happy in the view of himself; in the view of all his purposes and creation, and all the happiness he knew would result from them, and which were present to his eternal mind, who "declares the end from the beginning, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." If God has desires to gratify, and designs to accomplish, it is no impeachment of his independence to say, he cannot be happy without gratifying them. It would be an impeachment of his independence, if, in conformity with some modern notions, he *were not able* to gratify them. And this objection to their theory, the advocates of this new theology have not, so far as we know, attempted to obviate. If, as they affirm, he has desires for the salvation of men, which he is not able to gratify, will they tell us, why he is not miserable? Ungratified desire, disappointed purposes, whether in the mind of creatures, or the Creator, must be the

source of pain; and *the more in the Creator, because his desires are perfectly holy, and infinitely ardent and strong.* Could we, without irreverence—we regret there are those who not only make the hypothesis, but insist on the fact—could we suppose the Deity to have one desire which he is unable to gratify; one purpose he cannot accomplish; to us it seems, that one ungratified desire, or purpose, would make him wretched. Most certainly his blessedness could not be unmixed and uninterrupted.

If there be, then, any force in these suggestions, who does not see that it is essential to the eternal, undisturbed gratification of all God's desires, and to the accomplishment of all his purposes, that he be infinitely and forever glorified? It is impossible his desires should be gratified, and his purposes accomplished, without manifesting his character; without a full and combined manifestation of his essential excellence; just as impossible, as that the effect can exist without the cause. Thus to glorify himself is the consummation of his every desire and purpose. The perfect goodness of his pure and holy mind *must* be gratified; the exuberant fulness of his amiable and awful perfections *must* flow out; and if there were any thing effectually to obstruct its course, and oppose its progress, he could not be happy.

Let us look for a moment at the consequences of a possible defeat and disappointment of some of the benevolent desires and purposes of the Deity. *What if it were* beyond his power to carry into effect the designs of his benevolent mind; what if some grand design, in the dispensations of providence, should fail of its accomplishment; what if some endeared purpose in the method of redeeming mercy should suffer defeat; what if the gates of hell, in an evil hour, should prevail against the Church; what if many whom the Father has given to the Son should not come to him; what, as some affirm, if the hard and stony heart should prove superior to his efficient grace, and multitudes should be lost, whom God, in every view, sincerely and ardently desires to sanctify and save; what if the day of millennial mercy should never arrive, and the earth never be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters fill the sea; what if the voice of the archangel and the trump of God should fail to raise the dead, and summon the universe to his bar; what if the righteous were shut out, and the wicked received into the kingdom of Heaven; not only would every holy mind in the universe lament and

wail, but God himself, no longer beholding and enjoying the joy and felicity of his people, and disappointed in the purest and sweetest desires and designs of his wisdom and love, would no longer be "God blessed forever." Nor does it at all relieve the horror of this result, to suppose that the divine mind is indifferent to it. For, if his benevolence were so torpid as to be unmoved by such disappointment; if his desires and designs of kindness could be all erased from his mind, and he still remain unmoved and happy; if his perfections were so inactive and retired as never to be seen, and so dormant as never to be acted out, or be sensible of injury, then he would not be God.

But we have little need of hypotheses of this sort. God is infinitely happy, because he is, and will be infinitely glorified. Compared with the beauty and glory discoverable in the manifestation of his character, created excellence is lost sight of and forgotten. And in such beauty and glory, it is impossible but that the infinite mind should take supreme delight. He is happy because he is glorified, and he must be glorified to be happy. We venture no rash expression, we say nothing dishonourable, but what is most honourable to God, when we affirm, he would be the most wretched being in the universe, were he not glorified.

Thus would we vindicate the conduct of God in making himself his ultimate end. And let us ask in view of this exposition, what ultimate end can be compared with this? What higher consideration, what weightier inducement, what more benevolent impulse could move the eternal mind than this? We say, *benevolent* impulse; because there is no selfishness here. Selfishness regards its own, simply because it is its own, and not because it is supremely worthy of regard. It were a novel kind of selfishness that is gratified only in doing good; and this is all the selfishness discoverable in the ultimate end of Deity. It is true, that in all his vast operations, he makes himself first, himself midst, himself every thing; and the reason he does it is, that it is so unspeakably important, as we have seen, that he should be *all in all*. There is no end he could propose so benevolent as this. It is an end, which, from its very nature, cannot be accomplished without comprising a greater amount of good, than could be secured in any other way. There is no supreme end worthy of God but this. It had been a needless indifference to the best interests of his great empire, to have aimed ultimately, at any



thing below himself. Never does the eternal God appear so excellent, so worthy of supreme love, confidence, and homage, as when the grand object of his pursuit is seen to rise far above all the minor interests of his creation, and he himself is beheld "decked with light, as with a garment," and creating, upholding, and governing all things for his own glory.

There are several practical thoughts which we are loth to forego, though we have already greatly trespassed on the patience of our readers.

To us it appears, that the prominent truth contained in the preceding remarks, is one which ought to be frequently and faithfully exhibited. There is no principle of greater importance, either in a theoretical or practical view, than that God himself is the ultimate end of every thing he does. There is no truth with which we ought to be more familiar than this, and none which is capable of being more usefully employed, either in the confirmation and illustration of truth, the confutation of error, or the presentation of the most constraining inducements to elevated and consistent piety. No man can understand the doctrines of the Gospel, or discover their beauty and consistency, who does not see them in their relation to this important and fundamental truth; and no man can be led away by the subtilties of error who does. Establish this principle, and you give a mortal wound to every heresy that has distracted the Church and the world; relinquish this, and it is of little moment to which of all the variety of errors you give the preference. Once consent to come down from the lofty elevation that God is above all creatures, and that all things were made by him and for him, and no matter how low you fall. This truth is like a "moral perspective glass," it brings distant objects near, and presents, in their true and real position, objects that are inverted. It presents also a telescopic vision of the works and ways of God, by which every thing that he does is magnified, and in which he is seen forming his purposes and laying out his plans upon a scale of magnitude and grandeur, that overwhelms the human understanding. If he made all things for himself, then it became him to project and achieve a multitude of designs, the rectitude and magnificence of which, without this ultimate end, would not, and could not have been seen by mortal eyes. It became him to form all his purposes from eternity, and with the sublime view of demonstrating his own excellence



and glory. It became him to give existence to a world of moral agents, and to extend his government over them through interminable ages. "It became him by whom are all things and for whom are all things," to make the captain of our salvation perfect through sufferings, and to devise a method of mercy, which, though to the Jew a stumbling block, and to the Greek foolishness, is the wisdom and power of God to salvation. It became him to reveal the operations of a mighty and invisible agent in the moral renovation of his people, and thus to produce impressions of the Deity upon their minds, which shall prostrate them in everlasting humiliation before his throne. And it becomes him, in his progressive administrations, to give no account of any of his matters; but to magnify his own august dominion, and make all intelligences understand, that he legislates, not for a province, but for the universe; and that he plans and governs, not for a day, but for an infinite lapse of ages. Nothing so allures a holy mind to adoring and humble piety, as the thought that God made all things for himself, and is governing all according to the counsel of his own will. "I know," saith the inspired preacher, "that whatsoever God doeth, it shall be forever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it; and God doeth it that men should fear before him." In a word, establish this principle, and you shed lustre over all the works of God; you have a clue to every labyrinth in providence, and a solution of every mystery in grace; you have the key stone of the arch, sprung by unseen hands, when they laid the beams of his chambers in the mighty waters, and stretched out the line upon the foundations of the earth.

Again: If the suggestions we have made are true, supreme selfishness constitutes neither the religion of the Gospel, nor the religion of heaven. It is very possible, that in all our religious affections, and in all our religious conduct, in all we do for God and our fellow men, we may have a supreme regard to ourselves. Not a few moral philosophers and grave divines have advocated the sentiment, that all religion consists in a well directed selfishness. But if God himself is the ultimate end of all things, this is not the religion of the Gospel, nor of heaven. It matters not how *wisely*, nor with how much *discretion* a man undertakes to exalt himself, so long as his supreme object is not to please and glorify God. It is impossible for him, from a supreme regard to himself, to love and honour God more than himself. Every thing he does

may be in itself lawful, it may be religious and devout, it may be very discreet and wise policy; but if self be his grand, his ruling object, his spirit will be found to differ essentially from the spirit of angels, and of the just made perfect. The mind illumined by the Spirit of God, sees things as they are, and appreciates them according to their intrinsic worth. It ceases, in some good degree, to regard those that are of no comparative moment, and has learned to estimate those that are of real and permanent importance. And since there is nothing of so much importance as that God should be glorified, the real Christian desires nothing so much as this. God has the first and highest place in his heart. And since he loves every attribute of the divine character, so he desires to behold it in its native beauty. Every new manifestation of the Deity, raises the Creator in his esteem, sheds lustre around all that God is, and all that he does, and often fills his heart with joy unspeakable and full of glory. The people of God may be frequently under the cloud; but let God appear, and the cloud vanishes away; let God be exalted, and they are happy. This is not selfishness. This is the religion of heaven. The religion which springs from selfishness never truly terminates on God. The religion of the Gospel and of heaven neither springs from self, nor terminates in self, but springs from God, and terminates in God. And the man who has the most of this spirit is the most godly man. There are those who see and rejoice that God will be glorified; and there are those that see he will be glorified, and rebel and mourn. And wide, very wide, is the difference between them! No sinful affections will amalgamate with the glory of God. No love, no faith, no submission, no hope, no joy, that has not a stronger affinity to the divine glory, than to any other and all other objects, will stand the test of that day that is to "try every man's work of what sort it is."

Again: If the leading sentiment defended in these pages be true, most certain is it that all holy beings will be happy forever. There is no need of separating the glory of God and the eternal happiness of his people. We will not say that they are identified; for one is the effect, and the other the cause. The eternal, unchangable Jehovah has indissolubly bound the highest and eternal blessedness of all holy beings to the manifestation of his own glory. He cannot be glorified without making those who love him happy; and those who love him cannot be happy, unless he is glorified. If

you would make a good man miserable; if you would torture the spirits of the just made perfect with agony, go, tell it in heaven, that God will not be glorified. But if God is glorified, they are safe, they are happy. Nothing can disturb their serenity, nothing diminish their rapture. So long as their highest love terminates on God, and their largest desires on his glory, they shall be gratified to the full. They shall behold his glory, even the glory which the Son had with the Father, before the world was. They shall be filled with all the fullness of God.

And be it also remarked, that with equal certainty will the full manifestation of the divine glory be forever inseparable from the perdition of all the ungodly. If God is exalted, the wicked must die. It is a most fearful truth, that God cannot be glorified, without the perdition of the ungodly. And it is a truth which may well carry death to the hopes of every incorrigible sinner. If there are those who will sin, and sin incorrigibly, let them know that God is able to glorify himself by it all. Their rebellion shall never disturb God. It shall not disturb one peaceful emotion throughout his holy and happy kingdom. Though they "mean not so, neither in their hearts do they think so;" their incorrigible wrath "shall praise the Lord, and the remainder thereof he will restrain." The "expectation of the wicked shall perish," and their "triumphing shall be short." They shall sink forever under their disappointment and shame. They will eternally rebel and mourn, because they cannot maintain a successful controversy with God. And it will *shame* them, and it will fill them with despair and rage, that there is One above them who will turn all their iniquity into the means of his own and his people's advancement. This is the *Hell* to which the haters of God, and the despisers of his Son are destined. And nothing can deliver them from it, but the divine dishonour. No, nothing can exalt them, but what would humble God; nothing lift them up, but what would cast him down; nothing save them, but what would ruin him. O! "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God!" It will be a direful allotment to stand in the place of that man, on whom the great God undertakes to *glorify his justice*.

But we turn from this painful subject. Have we not, in view of the preceding illustration, the fullest assurance of the fact, that God will be abundantly and forever exalted? "He is of one mind, and none can turn him; and what his soul desireth, that he doeth." The Infinite One must cease to be wise, good,

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and omnipotent, ere he abandons the paramount purpose to glorify himself. His own great mind alone is capable of appreciating the worth and importance of this mighty object. None but himself is capable of fully conceiving it. But his discerning eye has been fixed upon it from the beginning, and will be fixed upon it to the consummation of all things. Here, all his ardent and powerful affections concentrate. The strength, the fervour, the zeal of his combined attributes are engaged, and publicly pledged to propel the magnificent and glorious design.

“God hath made all things for himself.” And when we say this, we utter a grand and awful truth. Whatever of majesty there is in the divine power; whatever of extent and resource in the divine wisdom; whatever of munificence in the divine goodness; whatever of liberality and tenderness in the divine mercy; whatever of terror and dismay in the divine justice; whatever of royalty and splendour in the divine supremacy, shall all be progressively disclosed. Every dark dispensation shall, by and by, be covered with light, and every intricate providence have a satisfactory solution. Every thing shall be laid open. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain made low. The wonderful revolutions in the material, animal, and intellectual kingdoms, the various and unexpected developments of the human character, the successive periods of time, and the revolving ages of eternity shall all be fraught with deep and impressive illustrations of the Deity.

“God hath made all things for himself.” Creation shall yet more and more unfold its wonders, disclosing the hand of Deity. Providence shall yet more and more bring to light his universal agency and care, while under his omnipotent influence, its mighty machinery, like the wheel of Ezekiel, shall move still more high and dreadful to the last. And the great redemption shall yet more and more spread far and wide its glories. The Father shall be exalted. Every knee shall bow before the Son, and every tongue confess to him. And the Eternal Spirit, so long retired from this apostate world, shall be seen and honoured, and by his own mighty influence on the soul, make impressions of the Deity hitherto unknown. Ages so long pregnant with preparations for the Son of Man, shall bring forth their expected blessings. The benevolent exertions now making in the earth, shall be succeeded by those greater and more extended, and these by greater, till

“a little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation—till the Spirit be poured from on high, and the wilderness become a fruitful field”—till these clouds of mercy, the glory of the age in which we dwell, and the hope of ages to come, shall issue in one extended and long continued effusion of the Holy Spirit—till the earth shall become a temple, and time a Sabbath, and these humble notes, so indistinctly heard from here and there a voice scattered over this wide creation, shall receive the accession of ten thousand tongues, and burst forth in one harmonious Alleluia to Him who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb, forever and ever.

DAVIES.

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#### ART. VII.—CHARACTER OF THE PRESENT AGE.

IN our second volume, page 372, we commenced some remarks on this subject, and took a rapid sketch of the *intellectual* features of our own age. It was our intention to have resumed the subject before this time, but circumstances beyond our control have compelled us to postpone it until now. Without recapitulation we proceed to say, that the present is an *age of strong excitement*.

The human mind is actuated by high and powerful excitements, in almost every department of social interest and important concern. If we have not greatly erred in our observation, it forms a prominent characteristic of the age in which we live.

It may seem, at first view, incompatible with intellectual attainments and influence, that feelings should be precipitate, prejudices strong, or energies fitful. The opinion is common that intellectual research is cold, too calculating and wary to admit of tumultuous feelings. In some respects, this sentiment is true. It is true in its application to the individual who secludes himself from social intercourse, and cultivates a severe employment of his intellect. The loftiest exercise of mere intellect may be cold as the polar firmament; and although its rays may illumine a hemisphere, they shed no genial warmth, and excite no emotion. It is also true that intellectual attainments, well directed, have a tendency to prevent a highly excited state of feeling. But more depends upon correct mental