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No. I.

ART. I.—*Survey of modern German Works on Interpretation.*

FOR reasons which have been too often stated in this miscellany to need a repetition now, we think it important that the American student should have some acquaintance with the German works which relate to the study of the Scriptures. We do not, indeed, wish to see a criticism which puts all the foundations out of course introduced into our church; we dare not rejoice in the scepticism which already creeps into some minds with regard to the canonical integrity, the authenticity, and the inspiration of the Bible. But we are persuaded, that if the church consents to close her eyes upon the increasing facilities for biblical investigation which are possessed in Germany, and to turn away from the controversies which are there waged, she will find herself in a field of battle without armour, or, if armed, with the mail and greaves and heavy weapons of a former age, wholly unsuited to the emergency, and the new modes of attack.

With these impressions, we are about to lay before our readers a succinct review of recent German publications, in the biblical department. As our object is to give information, we shall borrow from every source which is accessible to us. The works

little work which has called forth this article, we cannot but congratulate the Board by whose authority it is sent forth, the young gentlemen whose benefit it particularly consults, and the friends of the education enterprise at large, that there is at the head of these benevolent operations a gentleman in whom the Christian community have entire confidence, and whose benign and conciliatory influence is likely to be extensively felt in various parts of the Church. It has given us sincere pleasure to know, that he and some of his coadjutors have manifested a most friendly and generous spirit towards a sister institution; and that some who are concerned in conducting the operations of that institution, have, in turn, manifested no want of cordiality towards this. This is as it should be; and our prayer is, that there may be no strife between them; that, so far as may be, they may be fellow-helpers to the same great end, and may both live in the confidence, the prayers, the benevolent regards of the Christian community. And may both be managed in such a manner, that while each shall enjoy the privilege of distinct and independent action, they shall together form a most efficient part of that great mass of moral machinery, by which the Gospel is every where to be extended, and the whole earth subjected to the Redeemer's benign and peaceful reign.

ART. VI.—*The Evidences of Christianity in their external division, exhibited in a course of Lectures, delivered in Clinton Hall, in the winter of 1831—2, under the appointment of the University of the City of New York.* By CHARLES P. McILVAINE, D.D., Rector of St. Ann's Church, Brooklyn; Professor of the Evidences of Revealed Religion, and of Sacred Antiquities, in the University of the City of New York. *New York: Published by G. & C. & H. Carvill, pp. 565.*

WHEN it is considered how many excellent treatises have appeared in the English language, on the Evidences of Divine Revelation, it might, at first view, be thought a work of supererogation to add to their number; for, it may be asked, what can now be said on this subject, which has not already been repeatedly said, and that in the best manner? But, however specious this view may be, we have no doubt it is incorrect. There is no danger of having too many well composed books, on

this most interesting subject; for, even on the supposition that every thing has been brought forward which can be made to bear, with any weight, on the evidences of Christianity, it may be useful to have the same arguments repeated again and again, as long as infidels will bring up the old stale objections, which have been answered over and over again. Many persons may be disposed to read a new book, especially if they have some knowledge of the author, who never could be induced to peruse the substance of the same arguments in an old author. The object is not merely to put the truth into print, but to have it presented to the minds of those who may need to contemplate it. Besides, there is as great a variety in the mental structure of men, as in their countenances. Every thinking person, who pursues his own thoughts, and impartially weighs evidence in the scales of reason, will have, in his mode of presenting truth, something peculiar and original, which, to some other minds, will give it a force and advantage which it never possessed before. We have known in more instances than one, that conviction of a truth has not been the result of reading or hearing what the majority of judicious men would call the ablest and most logical argument; but, of one much inferior, which happened to be well adapted to the prejudices, attainments, and peculiar state of mind pertaining to the person. It is not always the strongest and clearest reasoning which prevails, but that which can be brought to bear on the peculiar objections and prejudices which exist in opposition to the truth. It has sometimes occurred to us, when we have seen half a dozen lawyers employed to plead the same cause, that this was bad policy, and that the whole evidence could be more luminously exhibited by an individual; but, upon reflection, we are convinced that this was a mistaken conclusion, and that the greatest safety is in a multitude of counsellors; for, where the object is to produce conviction in the minds of twelve men, the evidence must be presented in a variety of lights; and, it might happen, that some one of this number might remain unconvinced by the plea of almost all those advocates; and that one, perhaps, the least forcible of the whole, might, in the concluding argument, remove every doubt.

We recollect the case of a person who had long been in doubt about the scriptural warrant for the practice of infant baptism, and had carefully read those treatises which are commonly deemed most conclusive, without receiving any satisfaction; the same person happening to take up an essay on this subject, which, by most Pedobaptists, was considered a feeble performance, and rather a discredit to the author, who was reckoned to be a man

of sense, by reading this performance became perfectly satisfied.

It is wonderful how prejudice sometimes blinds the mind to the force of arguments, when they come from a certain quarter, and when the soul instinctively arms itself against conviction. A case of this kind occurred within our own knowledge. An ingenious and religious young man fell into doubt respecting some of the doctrines of the Church to which he belonged. An aged and well-informed man, took much pains to confirm him in what he believed to be the truth; and, to accomplish his purpose, put into the hands of his young friend a treatise, written with great clearness and force, on the point in question, which was read without having the effect of removing his scruples in the least. Not long afterwards, this young man became acquainted with some of the ministers of another denomination, from one of whom he received a pamphlet on the same subject, the perusal of which completely dissipated all his doubts. In communicating the fact to his former aged counsellor, he extolled the reasoning of this little book, as being most convincing, and far superior to any thing which he had before seen; when it was produced, behold, it was an abridgment of the identical treatise which he had before read, without the least conviction!

We say, then, that there is no danger of too great a number of defences of revealed religion, provided only they are judiciously composed, and contain the views and arguments which have produced unwavering conviction in the minds of the writers. We may, indeed, have too many books on this, or any other subject, if one merely borrows from those before published, without exhibiting any new thoughts, or setting the old evidence in a new light. But men of strong and original minds will always be successful in exhibiting truth in a manner peculiar to themselves. When Butler wrote his *Analogy*, he had been preceded by a multitude of able writers, on the evidences of natural and revealed religion, yet, the course of argument which he pursued was, in a great measure, untrodden. What a loss should we have sustained, if this profound writer had been deterred from publishing his immortal work, from the consideration that there were already books enough in print on this subject. And, although Paley has run more in the common track of preceding writers, what author, we would ask, has anticipated him, so as to render his *Evidences* superfluous? So far is this from being the fact, that he has, by his peculiar and characteristic manner, added new force to the arguments in favour of Christianity; and his work has become a manual and text book, in the instruction of youth,

on both sides of the Atlantic. Indeed, every man of genius has added to the force of the evidence of Christianity, by giving us the views and reasonings which proved satisfactory to his own mind. When we first met with Chalmers' Evidences, in the Edinburgh Encyclopædia, where they appeared without the name of the writer, and when, indeed, the author had not become conspicuous, we were struck with the power and originality of the argument, and felt the conviction that the pen had been wielded by the hand of no common man. We might illustrate our position by referring also to Soame Jenyns and Thomas Erskine, who have written on the internal evidences. Although there is very small similarity in their views, and methods of reasoning on this subject, yet, both exhibit the truth of Christianity, with a force which cannot easily be resisted. Bishop Sumner, too, in his Evidences, has made many original and striking remarks, which you will not find in any other author. But we were never so sensibly struck with the truth, that evidence with which we have been long familiar, may, by an original mind, be exhibited in a light almost entirely new, as when we first perused the small work of David Hartley, on the Evidences of Christianity. If the reader has not seen this short essay, which may be read in a little more than an hour, he has in reserve a gratification which is worth seeking. In speaking of writers who by their force and originality have added clearness and strength to the defence of divine Revelation, we ought not to pass Leslie by without notice. His Short and easy method with the Deists, has effected more in breaking the ranks of infidelity, than many a ponderous tome. It is, indeed, an admirable and most unanswerable concentration of evidence. He brings the discussion more directly to a point, than any other writer. This little work should be printed and circulated in every possible form, and through every possible channel. But the kind of work which is now most needed, is a popular and satisfactory answer to all the most common objections of Deists. These cavillers at Divine Revelation, seldom attempt to impugn or invalidate the arguments usually advanced in defence of Christianity; but, while they are unable to refute the arguments, they have numerous objections to the Bible, which are effectual to prevent their assent to the truth, and by which their minds are kept in a state of scepticism, if not of incredulity. If some learned man, who has the command of his time, and access to good libraries, would perform this work, he might be the means of rescuing many souls from the gulf of perdition, and might confer a rich benefit on all future generations. A work which should answer all objections, as those of Voltaire against the Old Testament have been answered, in the work entitled

"*Jews' Letters to Voltaire,*" would be a treasure of inestimable value; and, all that would be requisite would be, to collect the materials together which now lie scattered through many volumes. Watson, also, in his reply to Paine, has been very successful in answering plausible objections in a popular manner. Bishop Horne, in his *Letters on Infidelity*, has furnished us with a specimen of the victories which might be achieved in this field. But we do not remember to have seen, any where, an attempt of this kind, which to us appeared more satisfactory, than a Conversation held by a clergyman, whose name, if we remember aright, was Griffith, with Captain Wilson, of missionary memory, the result of which, and all other similar means, was the remarkable conversion of this sea-faring man, from confirmed infidelity, to be an humble and zealous disciple of Jesus Christ. We sincerely wish that this Conversation might be published by some body in the form of a tract, and widely circulated. There never was a time when the friends of Revelation needed to be more on the alert than at the present. The enemy is coming in like a flood, and we should not be remiss in our efforts to raise up a standard against him. Let those who are mighty stand in the breach.

But it is now time to take notice of the work, the title of which stands at the head of this article. Dr. M'Ilvaine has in these lectures displayed an ingenuity, an erudition, and an eloquence, which cannot but give him a high standing with discerning and impartial judges, among American authors. Before this, the public was well acquainted with Dr. M'Ilvaine as an eloquent and evangelical preacher, but we are inclined to think that few of his friends, even of those who were best acquainted with him, were prepared to expect from his pen a work characterized as this is by cogent and ingenious reasoning. The occasion on which these lectures were delivered, and the character of the audience to whom they were originally addressed, required, that they should be in a popular style. They were addressed to several hundred young men of the city of New York, of various attainments and pursuits; and one can scarcely conceive of a more important field of usefulness for a man capable of improving it to the best advantage. We are of opinion, after reading these discourses, that a better selection of a lecturer, for such a purpose, could not have been made: delivered with the usual commanding and pleasing eloquence of the author, it is not surprising, that they were heard with fixed and continued attention, from first to last. It is, however, often the case, that discourses delivered with every advantage of voice and action, produce an interest and impression, which are far from being realized when the same discourses are read in print; and we confess

that when we heard of the success of the lecturer in fixing attention, and creating a feeling of deep interest in his youthful audience, we did apprehend, that we should experience some disappointment in the perusal of these lectures in the closet. But this is far from being the fact. For while there is a copiousness in the style, and occasionally a repetition of the same ideas and reasonings, which were well suited to discourses actually delivered to an audience of young men; we have experienced no disappointment on the whole; but, on the contrary, our estimation of the talents and learning of the author has been raised many degrees. And after all that has been written on the evidences of divine revelation, we do not know a book better suited to the object for which these lectures were prepared, than the volume now presented to the public. It is admirably adapted to the instruction and conviction of intelligent and ingenuous youth; and might with great advantage be made a text book in our colleges, and other seminaries of learning. The only defect which it has in reference to such an object, is, that it treats only of the external evidences of revelation, whereas, a manual for colleges should comprehend the internal evidences also. But the same objection may be made to Paley and to Chalmers. Their treatises are entirely confined to a consideration of the external evidences.

It may appear somewhat astonishing that Dr. M'Ilvaine was able, in a state of health not the most perfect, to compose, in so short a time, discourses of so much real excellence, and in which so few faults are to be found. But this will appear the less surprising, when it is considered, that as chaplain to the national military academy at West Point, it became his duty to lecture on this subject; and while at that station, he had much opportunity of being intimately acquainted with the reasonings and objections of ingenious infidels; for when he commenced his duties there, it is understood, that among the officers and students, deistical sentiments were completely predominant; so that the inculcation of the truth of divine revelation produced among some of the gentlemen of the institution a violent re-action, which brought the young chaplain into frequent and severe conflict with men who had taken much pains to fortify their minds in the firm adherence to the deistical system. This rendered it necessary that he should study the evidences of Christianity thoroughly; and it also made him fully acquainted with the grounds on which they rested their cause. It was by this means, that Dr. M'Ilvaine was prepared, at so short a notice, to compose lectures which possess so much sterling merit. And now, when infidelity is again attempting to raise her head in this

land, and especially in the city of New York, it is exceedingly gratifying to the lovers of truth, to find, that God, in his providence, has been training some men for the contest; and has, in this instance, brought upon the field one who has proved himself capable of vindicating the cause of Christianity with a force and eloquence, which, we are sure, the most powerful of its enemies can never withstand.

It has also been a source of pleasing reflection to us, that the University of the city of New York, just commencing its career, and rising into notice, has assumed so bold a stand in favour of divine revelation; and among her earliest efforts has produced a volume, which, while it is eminently adapted to instruct the youth of that populous and rapidly increasing emporium, is, by its publication, likely to become useful to multitudes of others, both in the present and future generations. We sincerely hope that the directors and professors of this rising institution will proceed on the principles with which they have commenced. May they never be ashamed to avow that their University, is, in its constitution, essentially a *Christian Institution*, and "set for the defence of the Gospel." We hope, also, that what has been reported to us as their purpose, namely, making the Bible a regular classic, will be carried into complete effect. Too long have professed Christians cast contempt and dishonour on the volume of Inspiration, by excluding it from the schools of learning, and by exalting heathen authors above the writings of Moses and the prophets and apostles. The Bible presents the most interesting and fruitful field for the studies of our youth. Its history and biography—its antiquities and religious institutions—its poetry and wise moral maxims—its prophecies and types—and, finally, its sublime doctrines and salutary precepts, open to the ingenuous student, a rich mine of instruction, compared with which all the treasures of heathen antiquity are meager. If we are indeed Christians, let us pay due honour to our Master, in all our institutions of learning, and no longer be moved by the ridicule and scorn of infidels, whose object ever has been to banish the Bible, first from our schools, and next from the world. Providence, we believe, will cause those literary institutions to prosper, in which revealed religion is defended, and its principles inculcated. The outcry of sectarianism is unworthy of our notice. Christianity is no sect. It is the religion of Heaven; the greatest blessing which the world has received; the light of life, intended to show erring men the way to heaven; and shall we put this glorious light under a bushel? We confess, that ever since we observed the prominence given to religion in this University, our hearts have been drawn towards it, and we can-

not but pray for its prosperity. If there are others, who dislike the Bible, and every thing which savours of piety, let them institute seminaries of learning of their own, into which the sun of righteousness shall never dart one cheering ray; where the Bible shall be as little known as the Koran, and within which no messenger of heaven shall ever be permitted to set his foot. Let infidel men lavish their treasures in founding such institutions. Christians need not envy them, or regret that they have no part nor lot in them. The time will come when God will vindicate the honour of his own word, and of his own servants.

Although we have spoken generally of these lectures, as excellent, we would not be understood to assert, that they are all equally good, or that any of them are faultless. If we supposed that any advantage would result from it, we could point out several minor blemishes in these discourses; but our object in this review is, to recommend to our readers the careful perusal of this volume, being persuaded that it will afford pleasure as well as profit to every candid mind. And, especially, we would earnestly recommend these lectures to young men: youth of the other sex, are, in common, much less exposed to the poison of infidelity. But our young men need to be fortified with a panoply of proof, sufficient to repel every envenomed shaft which may be shot at them. Let them study the Evidences of Christianity thoroughly, and not only study its evidences, but learn its doctrines, and imbibe its spirit. It would be a happy arrangement if a course of such lectures as we have in this volume, should be appointed to be delivered to young men of our cities, every winter. Truth has nothing to fear, if only she can have a fair and impartial hearing. The strength of infidelity lies in ignorance, misrepresentation, and prejudice. Not one of the arguments for the truth of Christianity has ever been invalidated. Cavils and objections have been made without number; but what truth is so situated as to be free from the possibility of being objected to? The evidence for Christianity is just such as suits the nature of the subject, and such as we ought to expect in such a case.

Having taken a general view of these lectures, we shall now proceed to furnish our readers with a brief analysis of the contents of each. But before we enter on this part of our task, it will not be amiss to permit the modest and eloquent lecturer to explain the occasion of his undertaking to deliver this course of lectures, and also to give an account of the character of his audience, and the hopeful success of his labours.

The history of the following Lectures may be given in few words. In the autumn of eighteen hundred and thirty-one, when the University of the city of New York had not yet organized its classes, nor appointed its instructors, it was represented to the Council that a course of lectures on the Evidences of Christianity was exceedingly needed, and would probably be well attended by young men of intelligence and education. On the strength of such representation, the author of this volume was requested, by the Chancellor of the University, to undertake the work desired; not, he is well aware, on account of any special qualifications for a task which many others in the city would have executed much more satisfactorily; but because, having lectured on the Evidences of Christianity, while connected with the Military Academy at West Point, he was supposed to be in a great measure prepared at this time for a similar effort. It was under a considerable misunderstanding of the extent to which the proposed engagement would be expected to go, that the author expressed a hesitating willingness to assume its responsibility. The next thing was the honour of an appointment, by the Council of the University, to the office of "Lecturer on the Evidences of Christianity." Alarmed at the prospect of so much additional work, but desirous of serving a rising and most hopeful institution, as well as of advocating the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, he consented to the appointment, with the expectation of finding, in the manuscripts of the former course, enough preparation already made to prevent any considerable increase to his accumulated engagements. What was his disappointment, on inspecting those compositions, to find himself so little satisfied with their plan and whole execution, that instead of attempting to mend their infirmities and supply their deficiencies, it seemed much better to lay them all aside in their wonted retirement, and begin anew both in study and writing! Thus, in the midst of exhausting duties, as a parish minister, and in a state of health by no means well established, he was unexpectedly committed to an amount of labour which, had it been all foreseen, he would not have dared to undertake. Meanwhile, a class of many hundreds, from among the most intelligent in the community, and composed, to a considerable extent, of members of the "New York Young Men's Society for intellectual and moral improvement," had been formed, and was waiting the commencement of the course. A more interesting, important, or attentive assemblage of mind and character, no one need wish to address. The burden of preparation was delightfully compensated by the pleasure of speaking to such an audience. The lecturer could not but feel an engrossing impression of the privilege, as well as responsibility of such an opportunity of usefulness. He would thankfully acknowledge the kindness of divine Providence, in his having been permitted and persuaded to embrace it, and for a measure of health, in the prosecution of its duties, far beyond what he had reason to expect. His debt of gratitude is inexpressibly increased by the cheering information, that much spiritual benefit was derived from the lectures by some whose minds, at the outset of the course, were far from the belief of the blessed Gospel, as a revelation from God.

The idea of publication did not originate with the author. He began the work with no such view. Had it not been for the favourable opinion of the Council of the University, as to the probable usefulness of the step, and the urgent advice of distinguished individuals of that body, he would have shrunk from contributing another volume to a department of divinity already so well supplied by authors of the highest grade of learning and intellect. After the recent lectures of Daniel Wilson, D. D., the present excellent bishop of Calcutta, not to speak of many other and earlier works in the same field, it will not seem surprising to the present author if some should think it quite presumptuous, at least unnecessary, for a writer of such inferior qualifications, in every sense, to offer an additional publication. But all have not read, nor may all be expected to read the books which have already been issued. Nothing can be more conclusive; and yet, to multitudes of readers, they must remain as if they were not. A work of inferior claims may find readers, and do much good, in consequence of local circumstances drawing attention to its pages, where all others would be overlooked. Vessels of moderate draught may go up the tributary streams of public thought, and may deal advantageously with the minds of men, which others of heavier tonnage could never reach. Should such be an ad-

vantage of this unpretending publication, its apparent presumption may be pardoned, and its author will, by no means, have laboured in vain. That many faults will be found in it, he cannot but anticipate. That any have arisen from haste, carelessness, or want of pains, he will not dishonour his sense of duty, however he might excuse his understanding, by the plea. He can only say that he has tried to do well, and to do good. If, in the opinion of any qualified critic, he has succeeded, he desires to regard it as a matter of thankfulness to God, not of praise to himself. If he has failed, let the infirmities of the lecturer, not the merits of the subject, receive the blame.—*Preface.*

The number of Lectures in this volume, is thirteen. In the first, the author is occupied in showing the great importance of the subject, about to be discussed; and, especially, at the present time. He characterizes the age in which we live; first, as an age of freedom, when all opinions are fearlessly discussed, and doctrines long received are subjected to free inquiry and rigid scrutiny; and, secondly, as an age of science and discovery. He warns his hearers against levity and the pride of reason, and urgently recommends docility, seriousness, and prayer, as the proper pre-requisites for entering successfully on such an investigation. This lecture is well adapted to conciliate the audience, and to produce that state of mind without which no special advantage can be expected from such discourses.

The second Lecture commences with a distinct announcement of the object and plan which the lecturer proposes to pursue. The evidences of revelation are divided into *external* and *internal*, but notice is given that the former only will be brought into discussion. The argument is commenced by a demonstration of the authenticity of the books of the New Testament. The sources of proof adduced are,

1. The undeniable fact, that these books have been cited under the names which they now bear, by numerous authors in succession from the days of the apostles.

2. It is shown, that they were early collected into one volume.

3. That they were publicly read and expounded in the assemblies of Christians.

4. That commentaries and harmonies were early composed on the books of the New Testament, and translations of them made into various languages.

5. The agreement of the primitive church in regard to the canonical books is asserted, and insisted on with much force.

6. An argument is also drawn from the agreement of the early heretics, in regard to these books.

7. And, finally, it is shown that the apocryphal books are not supported by similar evidence. And the lecture is concluded with an account of the names and character of some of the most remarkable apocryphal books of the New Testament.

The same subject is continued in the third Lecture. It is here shown that the canon of the New Testament was "not made without great care, and the most deliberate, intelligent investigation." This is confirmed by an important and appropriate citation from Augustine; and it is shown by a particular example, how watchful and prompt the primitive Fathers were, in detecting an attempt at imposition, and how severely the man was censured, who endeavoured to bring in a supposititious writing, under the name of Paul.

The numerous catalogues of the books of the New Testament, compiled by distinguished Fathers, or by early councils, are referred to as furnishing undoubted proof of the agreement of the ancient Church, in receiving the same books which now form the canon. The exact time when the canon was closed, it is admitted, cannot be precisely ascertained, and it is also confessed, that in regard to a few of these books, there were doubts entertained for a while, by some persons; but, it is maintained, that the truth of Christianity can be supported independently of these books; so that even if they should be pronounced to be spurious, no evidence of divine revelation would be diminished. The author, however, enters into a particular investigation of the authenticity of these several books, and shows that the whole of those which are now received by Protestants, belong, properly, to the canon of the New Testament.

The next argument adduced for the authenticity of the books of the New Testament, is derived from the testimonies of the adversaries of Christianity. Julian the emperor, Hierocles, Porphyry, and Celsus, are particularly cited, and made to bear witness to the truth. The author then proceeds to confirm his position by an argument derived from the language and style of the New Testament, which he shows to be "in perfect accordance with the local and other circumstances of the reputed writers," and also with their known characters.

Having established by such undoubted evidence the early and universal reception of these books, the lecturer takes high ground, and asserts, that nothing less than a miracle can account for their early and universal currency. This position he defends with much ingenuity and force, and illustrates the point by a familiar, but striking supposition.

This lecture is properly brought to a close by a concise proof of the *integrity* of the books of the New Testament. This subject is distinct from the canonical authority of the books, but is closely connected with the argument for the authenticity of the New Testament. For, even if the Gospels were written by the Apostles and their companions, yet, if they have been altered,

and mutilated in their transmission to us, the former proof would be of little avail. This, however, is a subject of great extent, and could only be touched upon in such lectures as these.

From the analysis which has been given of these two lectures, on the authenticity of the books of the New Testament, it will be perceived by the intelligent reader, that Dr. McIlvaine has gone thoroughly into the discussion of his subject. In popular discourses, it is extremely difficult to do full justice to an argument of this sort, where so many testimonies must be cited, and so many ancient authors referred to, with which a majority of hearers, in a promiscuous assembly, must be totally unacquainted. Such arguments can with difficulty be rendered intelligible, and, perhaps, never very interesting to such an audience. We doubt, therefore, whether the lecturer was judicious in entering so much into detail on this point. Young men, unacquainted with ecclesiastical history, might be overwhelmed with the arguments adduced, but to such, the whole subject must be dark and confused. But, while we in candour say this, we are of opinion, that Dr. McIlvaine has succeeded better than any writer that we now recollect, in giving a popular and interesting air to this discussion, which, in the hands of most men, is exceedingly dry.

In the fourth Lecture, the subject of the credibility of the historical statements contained in these books, is considered. And here the eloquent lecturer, feeling it to be the foundation stone of the whole structure, lays out his strength in making the foundation firm. This, perhaps, is the discourse which manifests more talent for ingenious, logical, and powerful reasoning, than any one in the whole volume. It is, in our opinion, an admirable specimen of convincing argumentation, in a perspicuous, flowing, and, we may say, elegant style. Instead of giving an analysis of this lecture, we will make some extracts from it, of considerable length, from which the judicious reader will be able to form an opinion of Dr. McIlvaine's style and manner of reasoning:

“Let me ask by what sort of evidence you would feel assured of the credibility of any history, professing to relate events of a passed age? Suppose you should discover a volume hitherto concealed, professing to have been written by some well known individual of the Augustan age, and to contain a narrative of events in the personal history and domestic life of Augustus Cæsar. You would first examine into its authenticity. That settled, you would inquire into the credibility of its narrative. The first question would be, did the writer possess every advantage of knowing the events in the personal history of Augustus? May I depend on the sufficiency of his knowledge? Now he may not have lived with Augustus, and yet his knowledge may have been perfectly adequate. But your mind would be fully satisfied on this head, should it appear that the writer was not only a contemporary, but that he was domesticated with Augustus; conversed familiarly with him, lived at his table, assisted at his counsels, accompanied him on his journeys.

“The question of adequate knowledge being thus at rest, another would remain—*May I depend on the honesty of the writer?* In ordinary cases, you would be satis-

fied if nothing appeared in the book itself, or in the testimony of contemporaneous writings, impeaching his honesty. But your satisfaction would be much increased should you discover, in the style and spirit of the narrative, in its simplicity, modesty, and freedom of manner, in the circumstantial character of its details and the frequency of its allusions to time, place, and persons, those internal features of honesty, which it is so extremely difficult, if not impossible, to counterfeit. Your confidence would grow exceedingly, if, on a comparison of the book with other well established histories of the same times, you should discover, not only that there is no contradiction in any particular, but that all its allusions to the customs, institutions, prejudices, and political events of the times, are abundantly confirmed from other sources. This would set the honesty of the writer in a very favourable light.

"But suppose that, at this stage, you should discover three other books, upon the same subject; each evidently written by a person in the family and confidence of Augustus, or else with equally favourable opportunities of knowing him; each evidently an independent work, and having all the inward and outward marks of truth before detailed. Suppose, that on comparing these four histories together, you find that, while each contains some minor facts which the others do not, and relates, what all contain in common, in its own style and language, there is no disagreement among them; but on the contrary, the most perfect confirmation, one of another. Surely, after this, no further evidence could be demanded of the veracity of all those historians. But still, though you would have no right to require, you might perhaps discover additional evidence. You might search collateral history for the private characters of those writers; and how would it heighten your satisfaction to find that universally they were esteemed beyond reproach, even by their personal opponents. You might also inquire what motive they could have had for deception; and how conclusive would it seem in their favour to discover that, so far from any suspicion of such a motive attaching to them, they had undertaken to publish what they did, with the certainty of sacrificing every thing earthly, and actually plunged themselves by it into poverty, contempt, and suffering. One can hardly imagine stronger evidence of truth. None could, with any reason, require it.

"But yet there might be additional evidence. These historians, perhaps, had many and bitter personal adversaries: how did they treat their books? The books were published during the lifetime of many who had seen Augustus, and had witnessed the principal events described; they were published in the very places where those events took place, and in the midst of thousands who knew all about them. How, then, did their *enemies* treat these histories? Now, should you discover that the personal adversaries of these four writers, however disposed, were unable to deny, but on the contrary acknowledged, assumed, and reasoned upon their narratives as true; and furthermore, that the thousands who had witnessed the principal events recorded, never contradicted those narratives, but in numerous instances afforded all the confirmation they were capable of; I am sure you would think the whole evidence for the credibility of those four histories, not only conclusive, but singularly and wonderfully so." Pp. 138—141.

Again:

"From the brief view we have taken of the evidence which may be brought for the credibility of any historical document, it appears that the great points to be made out in favour of the writer are these two—*competent knowledge* and *trustworthy honesty*. Did he know enough to write a true account? and then, was he honest enough to be unable to write any other than a true account? Establish these, and the book is established—the question is closed. Let us take this plan as to the history before us. We have several independent writings containing the Gospel history. Let us select that of St. John, and try the question first upon it. We begin, then, with this most important inquiry:

"I. Had the writer of this book *sufficient opportunities of possessing adequate knowledge as to such matters of fact which he has related?* I do not suppose that much array of argument can be necessary to prove that he had every opportunity. It is to be first considered that the amount of knowledge required to enable John, or

either of the other evangelists, to give an accurate account of so much of the life of Christ and of the transactions connected with his cause, as he has embraced in his narrative, was not very considerable. The Gospel history is contained in a small space. Twenty-nine or thirty pages, of a common family Bible, comprise the whole of what John has related. It is a plain straight forward account of a very simple intelligible train of events. There are no labyrinths of historical truth to trace out—no perplexed involutions of circumstances to unravel. Consequently, when you consider that John, by the testimony of all tradition, as well as that of the Gospel history, was a member of the household of Christ—admitted into his most unreserved and affectionate intercourse—the disciple whom he specially loved—who accompanied him in all his journeyings, followed him into his retirements, stood beneath his cross, and was a constant companion of the other disciples and a witness of their actions—you will readily grant that John must have possessed all desirable opportunities of knowing, and must actually have known the Gospel history so perfectly, as to be fully competent to write an accurate account. I shall, therefore, refrain from any further remarks upon this branch of the argument, and shall pass to the second, in entire confidence that I leave no mind in any reasonable doubt of the *adequateness of our historian's knowledge*.

“The second, and the main question to be pursued is this: Have we reason to rely with implicit confidence upon the honesty of this historian? Believing him to have known enough to relate the truth, may we also believe that he was too honest to relate any thing but the truth? This is a fair and plain question. Prove the negative, and John's history must be given up. Prove the affirmative, and it ‘is worthy of all acceptance.’ We begin the argument for the affirmative.

‘II. *There is abundant evidence that the writers of the Gospel history were too honest to relate any thing but truth.*

“We will apply, in the first place, to the history itself. There are certain characteristic marks of historical honesty, which can hardly be counterfeited to any extent, and always produce a favourable impression. Take up the history written by St. John. I call your attention to the obvious fact, that,

“1st. Its narrative is in a very high degree *circumstantial*. A false witness will not need to be cautioned against the introduction of many minute circumstances into his statement. The more he connects it with the particulars of time, and place, and persons, so as to locate his facts, and bring in living men as associated with them, the more does he multiply the probability of detection. He gives the cross-examination every advantage. It would be impossible for a false statement, abounding in such details, and at the same time exciting general interest in the neighbourhood where, and soon after, they are alleged to have occurred, to escape exposure. Consequently, when we take up a narrative thus minutely circumstantial, and which we are sure did excite among all classes, where its events are located, the very highest, and most scrutinizing interest, and that too, within a short time after the period to which the events are referred; we always feel impressed with a strong persuasion that the writer had the consciousness of truth, and the fearlessness of honesty. It is evident that he had no disposition, and therefore no cause, to shun the closest investigation. On the other hand, if you take up any books professing to be histories of events within the reach and investigation of those among whom they were first published, but yet in a great measure untrue, you will find a great deficiency of such minute details of time, place, and persons, as would serve to test their faithfulness. Compare them with the histories of the Peloponnesian and Gallic wars, by Thucydides and Julius Cæsar, and you will see directly how strong a feature of true narrative, in distinction from whatever is in a great degree invented, is a circumstantial detail of minute particulars.

“Generality is the cloak of fiction. Minuteness is the natural manner of truth, in proportion to the importance and interest of the subject. Such is the precise manner and continual evidence of the honesty of St. John. His history is full of the most minute circumstances of time, place, and persons. Does he record, for example, the resuscitation of Lazarus? He tells the name of the village, and describes the particular spot where the event occurred. He gives the names of some of the principal individuals who were present; mentions many unbelieving Jews as eye-

witnesses; states the precise object for which they had come to the place; what they did and said; the time the body had been buried; how the sepulchre was constructed and closed; the impression which the event made upon the Jews; how they were divided in opinion in consequence of it; the particular expressions of one whose name is given; the subsequent conduct of the Jews in regard to Lazarus. This, you perceive, is being very circumstantial. It is only a specimen of the general character of St. John's Gospel. It looks very much as if the writer was not afraid of any thing the people of Bethany, or the survivors of those who had been present at the tomb of Lazarus, or the children of any of them, might have to say with regard to the resurrection. Now, when you consider that John's history was widely circulated while many were yet living, who, had these events never been in Bethany, must have known it; and among a people, who, in addition to every facility, had every desire to find out the least departure from truth, I think you will acknowledge that the circumstantial character of this book is very strong evidence that the author must have written in the confidence of truth.

"2d. Another striking evidence, to the same point, is seen in this, that the author exhibits no consciousness of narrating any thing, about which, as a matter of notorious fact, there was the smallest doubt. He takes no pains, evinces no thought of attempting, to convince his reader of the truth of what he relates. On the contrary, the whole narrative is conducted with the manner and aspect of one who takes for granted the entire notoriety of his statements. He comes before the public as one familiarly known, needing no account of himself or of his pretensions to universal confidence. He goes straight forward with his story, delivering the least and the most wonderful relations in the same simple and unembarrassed manner of ease and confidence, which nothing but an assurance of unimpeachable consistency can explain. Nothing is said to account for what might seem inexplicable; to defend what would probably be cavilled at; to anticipate objections which one, feeling himself on questionable ground, would naturally look for. The writer seems to be conscious that, with regard to those for whom especially he wrote, all this were needless. He is willing to commit his simple statement alone, undefended, unvarnished, into the hands of friend or foe.

"Nothing is more remarkable in this connexion than that, while he could not have been ignorant that he was relating many very extraordinary and wonderful events, he shows no wonder in his own mind, and seems to expect no wonder among his readers. This looks exceedingly like one who writes, not of extraordinary events, just contrived in his own imagination, but of extraordinary events, which, whatever the wonder they excited when first known, are now perfectly notorious, not only to himself, but to all his readers. It is one thing to relate a series of astonishing occurrences which we feel are perfectly new to the readers, and a very different thing to relate the same to those who have long since been familiarly acquainted with their prominent particulars, and desire only a more circumstantial and confidential account. In the former case, the writer would naturally, and almost necessarily, betray in his style and the whole texture of his statement, an expectation of the wonder and probable incredulity of his readers. In the latter, he would deliver his narrative as if he were thinking only of an accurate detail of truth, without particular reference to whether it was astonishing, or the contrary. Thus it is with St. John. There is no appearance of his having felt as if any of his Gospel would be new, or excite any new emotions of wonder in his readers. The marvellous works of Christ were, at that time, notorious. When first heard of, they excited universal astonishment. "His fame went abroad, and all the people were amazed." But so much time had now elapsed, that emotions of wonder had subsided, under the influence of repetition and familiarity. In striking consistency with this is the whole aspect of St. John's narrative. He goes directly forward in the relation of events, in themselves exceedingly impressive and astonishing, exhibiting no sign of any astonishment in his own mind, anticipating none in his contemporaneous readers. How is this to be explained? One can discover no plausible explanation but in the supposition that he was conscious of recording events, with which, in their chief particulars, the public mind had been entirely familiarized. This may deservedly be considered a strong indication of truth." Pp. 142—149.

Once more:

"Hitherto we have directed your attention to the Gospel history as furnished by only one of its witnesses. But suppose you should unexpectedly discover in the ruins of Herculaneum three distinct writings, heretofore entirely unknown, but containing the most satisfactory evidence of authenticity, and evidently written in the first century of Christianity, by three several and independent authors, each possessed of the best opportunities of knowledge. And suppose that in every one of them there should be found a history of Christ and his Gospel; what an uncommon opportunity would it seem of trying the accuracy of this book of St. John. Even if these three newly discovered authors were bad men; yet, if their statements should agree with his, it would determine the accuracy of his history. But if it should appear that they were all good men, how much more complete would be their confirmation. Suppose, however, it should turn out that these three writers were not only good men, but, like St. John, disciples of Christ and ministers of his Gospel, what effect would their concurrent testimony then have upon his accuracy? Would it be diminished in conclusiveness by the discovery of their Christian character? I believe that, in the minds of multitudes, it would; but most unjustly. Precisely the contrary *should* be the consequence. If four of the chief officers in Napoleon's staff had published memoirs of his life, I venture to say that the concurrence of their several statements, instead of having its evidence weakened, because they were all attached to Napoleon, and admitted to his domestic circle, would be greatly strengthened, in your estimation; by that very circumstance, inasmuch as it would ensure the accuracy of their knowledge, without impeaching their integrity. But some seem to suppose that the laws regulating the force of testimony are all changed, as soon as the matter of fact in question, is removed from the department of profane, to that of sacred history.

"How much has been made of the testimony of the Roman historian, *Tacitus*, to some of the chief facts of the Gospel history. It is the testimony of a Heathen, and, therefore, supposed to be incomparably valuable. Now suppose that *Tacitus* the Heathen had not only been persuaded of the facts he has related, but had been so deeply impressed with the belief of them as to have renounced heathenism and embraced the Christian faith, and then published the history we now possess—who does not know that, with the infidel, and with many a believer, his testimony would have greatly suffered in practical force? No reason for this can be given, except that we have a vague idea that a Christian in the cause of Christianity must be an interested witness. To be sure, he is interested. But is his testimony the less valuable?

"A scientific man, bearing testimony to a phenomenon in natural history, is an interested witness, because he is devoted to science, but his testimony is not the less valuable. A good man, bearing testimony to the character of another good man, is an interested witness, because he is the friend of virtue and of all good men, but his testimony is not the less valuable. In this, and no other sense, were the original disciples interested witnesses. They were interested in Christianity, only so far as they believed it true. Suppose them to have known it to be untrue, and you cannot imagine the least jot or tittle of interest they could have had in it. In such a case, on the contrary, the current of all their interests and prepossessions would run directly and powerfully in opposition to Christianity. This, then, being all the way in which they can be regarded as interested, the force of their testimony, so far from being in the least impaired, is greatly enhanced by the consideration. The bare fact that any primitive writer, bearing witness to events related by St. John, was not a Heathen, or a Jew, but a Christian, is the very thing that should be regarded as completing his testimony. Is the evidence of *Tacitus*, who relates such events, but remained a Heathen, any thing like so strong; as if we could say, it is the evidence of *Tacitus*, who was a Heathen, but believed those events so firmly that he became a Christian? If a man speak well to me of the virtues of a certain medicine, but does not use it himself, is his opinion half so weighty as if he were to receive it into his own vitals, and administer it in his family? Would it be reasonable, in this case, to refuse his testimony, because you might denominate him an interested witness?" Pp. 151—154.

We make no apology for giving extracts of such length, from this excellent Lecture because, we believe that every intelligent reader will be gratified with these specimens of reasoning and eloquence. But to judge correctly of the talent here displayed, the whole discourse must be perused; and this, we hope, will be the result of what we have said by way of commendation.

In the fifth Lecture, Dr. M'Ilvaine enters upon the discussion of the important subject of miracles; and defends with much ingenuity and ability the following positions, viz.

1. That there is nothing unreasonable or improbable in the idea of a miracle being wrought in proof of a divine revelation.

2. If miracles were wrought in attestation of the mission of Christ and his apostles, they can be rendered credible to us by no other evidence than that of testimony.

3. Miracles are capable of being proved by testimony. Under this head the lecturer undertakes, at some length, a refutation of the specious but sophistical argument of Mr. Hume, which has already called into exercise so many able pens. From Dr. M'Ilvaine, the learned sophist meets with no quarter. He is ably pursued through all the windings of his sceptical metaphysics.

4. The testimony in proof of the miracles of the Gospel, has not diminished in force, by the increase of age. This proposition is exceedingly evident; yet its truth is called in question by the celebrated Locke. Our author is happy in his mode of illustrating the point; and renders it so clear, that we wonder how any candid mind can resist the evidence.

5. "That in being called to examine the credibility of the Gospel miracles by the evidence of testimony, we have a special advantage over those who were present to try them by the evidences of their senses." There is some appearance of paradox in this proposition; and, there is an awkwardness in the mode of expressing it, which is very foreign from Dr. M'Ilvaine's usual felicitous and perspicuous style. Accordingly, he has to inform his audience, that he does not mean what his words seem to mean. And when he explains fully what he intends, we are far from being satisfied with the opinion expressed, or with the reasoning by which it is attempted to support it. It amounts to this, that evidence less convincing and striking puts our love of truth and diligence in investigating it, to a severer test, than if this evidence was overwhelming and irresistible. It is, therefore, more suitable to a state of probation. Upon this principle, it may be a special advantage to some persons, that they did not hear the clear and convincing arguments contained in these Lectures, as their love of truth may, in consequence, be subjected to a severer

test. It may be, and, no doubt, is true, that there is more virtue in embracing the truth, when its discovery requires more diligence and impartiality in weighing its evidence, than when it shines with irresistible clearness : but, it is a false inference from this, that the weaker evidence is more advantageous to men than the stronger. Such a conclusion, if made universal, would discourage all attempts to demonstrate truth by clear irrefragable arguments. But we are well persuaded, that the inculcation of such a sentiment was foreign from the mind of the distinguished lecturer; and yet we do not see what other conclusion can be fairly drawn from what he has said under this particular. The whole argument seems to have been suggested by what our Lord said to Thomas, "Because thou hast seen me thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." But this declaration does not teach that those who have not seen enjoy "a special advantage" over those who have seen. It merely pronounces a benediction on those who, though enjoying much less evidence than Thomas, yet believed. We would, therefore, recommend, that in the next edition, (and we sincerely hope there may be many) this last proposition may be entirely omitted.

In the sixth Lecture the subject of miracles is continued, and the nature of the evidence which they afford is distinctly exhibited under several particulars:

1. It is first remarked, that admitting the facts recorded in the Gospels to have actually occurred, many of them must have been genuine miracles.

2. The miracles of Christ were such as could at once be brought to the test of the senses.

3. They were performed, for the most part, in the most public manner.

4. The miracles of Christ and his Apostles were very numerous, and of great variety.

5. The success, in every instance, was instantaneous and complete.

6. In all other accounts of miracles, besides those recorded in the Bible, there was often but a small number of successful cases, while the greater part remained unimproved in health. As, for example, this was the fact at the tomb of the Abbé Paris.

7. The length of time, during which Christ and his Apostles wrought miracles, deserves special consideration. Seventy years elapsed between the commencement of the ministry of Christ, and the death of the last of the Apostles. During all this period, the miraculous gifts in question were freely exercised.

8. "We have the most perfect certainty that the miracles of the Gospel underwent, at the time they were wrought, and for a

long time after, the most rigid examination from those who had every opportunity of scrutinizing their character."

9. "The adversaries of the Gospel were placed in the most favourable circumstances for a thorough investigation of the reality of its miracles, by their being published and appealed to, immediately after, and in the very places where, they occurred."

10. Then we are called upon to consider, "who the agents were, whose works were obliged to stand such trials."

11. "Notwithstanding all that was done to entice and intimidate the early Christians who were eye-witnesses of what Jesus or his apostles wrought, none were induced to confess themselves deceived; or, that they had seen any thing but truth in those miraculous gifts, by which they had been persuaded to embrace the Gospel."

12. The miracles were of such a nature, that they who testified respecting them must have known whether they were true or false. If the latter were the case, they must have been deliberate impostors; consequently not honest, much less, good men. Their motives then must have been sordid or ambitious. But how can this be reconciled with the account of those miracles, in which no evidence of any sinister or selfish motive appears?

13. The truth of the miracles is again argued from the concession of the adversaries of Christianity.

14. But even better testimony than that of enemies is claimed. It is that of men who had once been bitter enemies, but were converted by the force of truth. Here the conversion of Paul, and his uniform and unceasing testimony are introduced.

In the conclusion the evidence is summed up, and exhibited in one view, with great force, and much genuine eloquence.

The absurd consequences which will necessarily follow from a denial of the miracles of the New Testament, are strongly exhibited. It is shown with great force, that what we must believe on that supposition is far more incredible than all the miracles of the Bible.

The seventh and eighth Lectures, occupying nearly one hundred pages of the volume, are occupied with Prophecy. As this argument does not admit of an analysis, we shall pass over this important part of the discussion without any particular remarks; except to express our opinion, that the subject is treated in a full and luminous manner. Neither has the author run precisely in the track of Newton, or any author with whom we are acquainted. Still, there is nothing new or original to be gleaned in this field. It is enough if a good selection is made of the prophecies which have been evidently and remarkably fulfilled.

The ninth Lecture, on the propagation of Christianity, is an admirable discourse. We doubt whether it is not the ablest in the whole series. Certainly, we are not able to point out any author, who has treated this subject more judiciously or more fully.

The lecturer makes a remark at the commencement of this discourse, which strikes us with peculiar force. It is, that the several arguments which may be adduced in favour of Christianity, as from miracles, from prophecy, and from the propagation of the Gospel, are distinct, and independent of each other. The argument, therefore, is of that kind which Paley calls *cumulative*.

The difficulties which the apostles had to surmount are stated with uncommon clearness and force, and make a most formidable array.

1. The idea of propagating a new religion, to the exclusion of every other, was at that time a perfect novelty to all mankind.

2. "In the whole character of the Gospel, as a system of religious doctrine, and a rule of heart and life, there was a barrier in the way of its progress, which to human wisdom and power would have rendered their cause perfectly desperate."

3. The whole influence of every priesthood, Jewish and Pagan, must have been arrayed against their enterprise.

4. To this may be added, the authority of the magistrate; for in all countries the support of the religion of the State, was the duty of the magistrates.

5. And the prejudices and passions of all the people. These among the Gentiles were powerful, not only in favour of their own superstitions, but in opposition to a religion originating among the Jews; and especially among such as were greatly hated and persecuted by the great body of the Jewish nation.

6. "The wisdom and pride of the heathen philosophers were by no means the least formidable enemies with which the Gospel had to contend."

7. "In connection with these powerful adversaries, consider the character of the age in which the apostles undertook the propagation of Christianity." It was an age of high cultivation—of profound peace, when men had full leisure to investigate the claims of a new religion—and above all, an age strongly characterized by scepticism.

8. These difficulties will appear enhanced by a consideration of the persons to whom the propagation of the Gospel was committed.

9. And also by considering "the circumstances of depression and discouragement under which they commenced their work."

10. And the mode which they adopted. They sought no favour from worldly influence; courted no human indulgence; waited for no earthly approbation; paid as little deference to rank, wealth, or human learning, as to poverty and meanness.

11. As might have been expected, the attempt to propagate Christianity was met every where by the most strenuous hostility, and the fiercest persecution.

It is also certain that the apostles understood the difficulties, and anticipated the dangers of their work.

The lecturer then proceeds to consider the success of the apostles in executing their Master's commission. On the fiftieth day after his death, they commenced, beginning at Jerusalem. On the first day of their preaching, three thousand souls were converted. In a few days the number was increased to five thousand; and in a short space, multitudes, both of men and women, and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith. And in a few years, Christianity had extended itself through the whole extent of the Roman empire, and beyond it, among the barbarous nations. It spread especially in the most cultivated and enlightened cities and provinces. Men of all ranks and classes fell under its influence. And, although repeatedly the most cruel and sanguinary edicts were passed to suppress the new religion, and ten bloody persecutions wasted the Church; yet it continued to prevail until the whole Roman empire became Christian. In no way can this success be accounted for, but by referring it to the mighty power of God. No parallel to this revolution can be found in the history of the whole world. The spread of Mohammedanism by the successful arms of the false prophet and his successors, is no parallel case, as Dr. M'Ilvaine, after many others, has demonstrated by a fair comparison of the two instances.

We are, however, rather surprised that Dr. M'Ilvaine, in this place, takes no notice whatever, of the insidious and laboured attempt of Gibbon, to account for the rapid and wide extension of Christianity, without any aid from miracles, or any supernatural influence. Even if this subject is discussed in another part of these Lectures, which we do not recollect, yet undoubtedly this is the proper place to notice an attack which is likely to injure Christianity more than any other, on account of its being inserted in the midst of a very important historical work with which every scholar must be acquainted. For a full refutation, however, we would refer our readers to *Watson's Apology for Christianity*, and *Faber's Difficulties of Infidelity*.

Upon the whole, we are so much pleased with this argument, and the treatment is so popular, that we cannot but wish, that

the author would permit it to be published separately as a tract. The misfortune is, that large works will not be read by most of those who need to read on this subject. Ten would read this Lecture as a tract, for one who could be induced to peruse the whole volume.

The tenth and eleventh Lectures are on *the fruits of Christianity*. The subject is divided into two great branches. First, *The effects of Christianity on society in general*: secondly, *Its effects on the character and happiness of individuals*. The tenth Lecture is occupied with the first of these divisions; and there is, probably, a greater display of learning in this discourse than in any other in the book. The author gives a picture of heathen customs, and heathen morality, as they existed even among the polished Greeks and Romans, and it must be confessed it is sufficiently disgusting. What is aimed at in this argument is, to prove that the moral state of the world has been greatly meliorated by the influence of Christianity: And all that is requisite to render it irrefragable and convincing to every mind, would be a purity of character in nations called Christian, corresponding in any degree with the doctrines and precepts of this religion. But alas! the bad lives of professed Christians have, in all ages since the first, furnished infidels with their strongest objections to its divine origin. Still it is true that the effects of the Gospel on the state of society are not only perceptible, but very remarkable; and Dr. McIlvaine has treated this topic in a learned, and very judicious manner. We are of opinion, however, that it is very difficult to bring this argument to a very definite point. There is so wide an extent in the field before our vision, so great a variety in the manners of nations, both Pagan and Christian, and so many causes in operation, affecting more or less the changes which have occurred, that it is more difficult to make this argument bear on the mind of the learned sceptic than almost any other. Gibbon, to whom all the facts were familiar, although he sometimes gives an unwilling testimony to the good effects of Christianity, yet upon the whole seems to give a decided preference to Paganism. But undoubtedly his mind was deeply imbued with strong prejudices; and the facts which he records in detail, are abundantly sufficient to prove to any candid mind, that the reception of the Gospel in the Roman empire put an end to many enormous evils, and shameful abuses. And our only regret is, that so much moral evil still deforms the face of society among Christian nations. When shall the time be, when nations shall not only take the name, but receive the full impress of the Christian religion, on their national character? We find no fault, however, with the manner in which this

subject is here handled; the objection is to the necessary vagueness of the argument itself; but it was right to bring it forward with all the force which can be given to it, and this Dr. McIlvaine has done with much ability and learning.

In the eleventh Lecture, where the author considers the effects of Christianity on individuals who sincerely embrace it, the subject which was before vague becomes definite. The effects of Christianity on all except sincere believers, must, of necessity, be very partial and superficial: but on these the change is often exceedingly striking, and the reformation not only great but permanent. And such effects are seen in all countries where the Bible is read, and the true doctrines of the Gospel preached. We cannot deny ourselves the pleasure of laying before our readers a few short extracts from this Lecture. The first is a brief but animated description of the genuine effects produced on the minds of sinners by the Gospel:

"Now behold the change! It is a change not merely of belief, but of heart. Their whole moral nature has been recast; affections, desires, pleasures, tempers, conduct, have all become new. What each hated a few days since, he now affectionately loves. What then he was devotedly fond of, he now sincerely detests. Prayer is his delight. Holiness he thirsts for. His old companions he pities and loves for their souls' sake; but their tastes, conversation, and habits, are loathsome to his heart. Feelings, recently obdurate, have become tender. A temper, long habituated to anger, and violence, and resentment, is now gentle, peaceful, and forgiving. Christians, whose company and intercourse he lately could not abide, are now his dear and chosen companions, with whom he loves to think of dwelling for ever. The proud unbeliever is an humble disciple. The selfish profligate has become self-denied and exemplary, animated with a benevolent desire to do good. All these changes are so conspicuous to others; he has become, and continues to be, so manifestly a new man, in life and heart, that the ungodly are struck with the suddenness and extent of the transformation." Pp. 441—2.

Our next extract—and it shall be the last—is made for the sake of a striking anecdote which it contains, of the remarkable conversion of a sailor, which fell under the observation of the reverend lecturer:

"Who has attended to the blessed effects with which the distribution of tracts and Bibles has been accompanied, and cannot call to mind instances in which the wonderful changes that were wrought in the Earl of Rochester, in Col. Gardiner, and in the once degraded, and afterwards excellent John Newton, have in all important respects been equalled? Since I commenced the preparation of this lecture, a case in point has come to my view. Called from my study, to see a man who had come on business, I found in the parlour, a well-dressed person, of respectable appearance, good manners, and sensible conversation—a stranger. After a little while he looked at me earnestly, and said: "I think, sir, I have seen your face before." "Probably," said I, supposing he had seen me in the pulpit. "Did you not once preach, in the receiving ship at the navy-yard, on the prodigal son, sir?" "Yes." "Did you not afterwards go to a sailor sitting on his chest, and take his hand, and say, 'friend do you love to read your Bible?'" "Yes." "I, sir, was that sailor; but then I knew nothing about the Bible or about God; I was a poor, ignorant, degra-

ded sinner." I learned his history, in substance, as follows: He had been twenty-five years a sailor, and nearly all that time in the service of the British navy, indulging in all the extremes of a sailor's vices. Drunkenness, debauchery, profaneness made up his character. The fear of death, or hell, or God, had not entered his mind. Such was he, a sink of depravity, when an humble preacher of the Methodist denomination, one day, assembled a little congregation of sailors in the ship to which he was attached, and spoke on the text: "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." He listened, merely because the preacher was once a sailor. Soon it appeared to him that the latter saw and knew him, though he was sitting where he supposed himself concealed. Every word seemed to be meant for a description of him. To avoid being seen and marked, he several times changed his place, carefully getting behind the others. But whenever he went, the preacher seemed to follow him, and to describe his course of life, as if he knew it all. At length the discourse was ended; and the poor sailor, assured that he had been the single object of the speaker's labours, went up and seized his hand, and said: "Sir, I am the very man. That's just the life I have led. I am a poor miserable man; but I feel a desire to be good, and will thank you for some of your advice upon the subject." The preacher bade him pray. He answered, "I have never prayed in my life, but that I might be damned, as when I was swearing; and I don't know how to pray." He was instructed. It was a day or two after this, while his mind was anxious but unenlightened, that Providence led me to him, sitting on his chest. He said I showed him a verse of the Bible, as one that would guide him. I asked if he remembered which it was. "Yes, it was, 'Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.'" Soon after this, his mind was comforted with a hope of salvation through Jesus Christ. His vices were all abandoned. He became, from that time, a new creature in all his dispositions and habits; took special care to be scrupulously attentive to every duty of his station; gained the confidence of his officers; and, having left the service, has continued ever since (more than three years) an exemplary member of society, and of the Church of Christ. He is so entirely renewed, that no one could imagine, from his appearance or manners, that he had been for twenty-five years, a drunken, abandoned sailor. This case I have selected only because it was at hand. It is by no means a solitary case. Nor is it any the worse for being taken from among the poor and ignorant. I know not that beastly vice is more susceptible of removal, or that habits of drunkenness, debauchery, and profaneness, are any more capable of being changed into those of soberness, purity, and prayer, for being seated in ignorance and poverty, than when associated with learning, rank, and opulence." Pp. 443—6.

The latter part of this Lecture exhibits a striking contrast between the lives and deaths of eminent Christians and distinguished unbelievers. Probably no part of these eloquent discourses produced an impression so deep and sensible on the youthful audience who heard them, as these historical details. Many interesting facts are here collected into a group, and the only drawback to our gratification, in contemplating the salutary effects of such an exhibition on multitudes of young men who did not hear the discourses, is, that we fear the bulk of the volume is too great, and that few of that description for whom they were chiefly intended, will be induced to wade through a book of nearly six hundred pages. This remark suggests an idea which we will throw out for the consideration of the pious author, who, we are sure, prefers usefulness to fame. It is, that in the next edition of these Lectures, their bulk should be reduced at least one-third, if not one-half. It has struck us all along, that the only promi-

nent fault which they have, as printed discourses, is, that they are too copious, and the style too diffuse. For delivery *viva voce* they are excellently adapted; but discourses to be read should be in a style more concise; and where the same train of thought occurs a second time, many things very proper to be repeated in the delivery, might be advantageously rescinded. We are induced to enforce this suggestion by another consideration, which is, that if these Lectures were somewhat abridged, they would then form a volume of suitable size to be used as a manual in literary institutions. We hope that when they appear again, they will assume the form of a neat duodecimo instead of a ponderous octavo; and if our judgment is not incorrect, their usefulness will be more than double.

The twelfth Lecture contains a summary of the evidence before adduced; and the thirteenth is *on the inspiration of the Scriptures*, with concluding observations. The subject of this last Lecture is exceedingly important, but there was not space allowed for a thorough discussion of a subject, which is environed with not a few difficulties. Upon the whole, we would recommend that the subject of this Lecture be reserved for another work, and that *the internal evidences* be also considered, which, as in the case of Bishop Wilson's work on the Evidences, would form a second volume.

ART. VII.—*Suggestions to Theological Students, on some of those traits of Character, which the spirit of the age renders peculiarly important in the Ministers of the Gospel.*

THE question which the Apostle Peter proposes, in view of the second advent of the Son of God, is one which Christians, and Christian ministers especially, should often ponder, *What manner of men ought ye to be?* There is, obviously, much which the candidate for the ministry needs, which is equally necessary for every believer. Yet, as every man's duty is more or less modified by the peculiarity of his circumstances, it is evident, that there are some traits of character which are especially important, to those who are to be ensamples and leaders of the flock of Jesus Christ. Of these traits, and of those especially which the peculiarity of our circumstances renders important for us, we should form a definite conception; and, having clearly apprehended their nature, steadily labour for their attainment. It is, indeed, much to be feared, that few men adequately feel the necessity of striving to form their characters aright. They neither