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ART. I.—*Lectures on the Evidences of Christianity, before the Lowell Institute, January, 1844.* By Mark Hopkins, D. D., President of Williams College. Boston: Published by T. R. Marvin. 1846. Svo., pp. 383.

WE fully agree with the learned author, that the evidences of our religion are exhaustless. Though truth is one, as the centre of a circle is one, it may be viewed from as many points as are to be found in the circumference. Every comparison of revealed truth, with all other truth, tends to show the harmony of the whole. According to the cast and temper and discipline of individuals, different minds will view the subject differently; and hence the body of evidence may be expected to accumulate as long as the world lasts. There are kinds of proof which are fitted to certain states of society and human opinion, and which, after serving their purpose, cease to be regarded. Thus, for example, the reasonings of the early Fathers, in their apologetical treatises, which seem to have been sufficiently cogent in their day, exhibit arguments on which we should scarcely rely in ours. Every student of theology has been struck with the very different points of view assumed on this subject, by the Germans and the English, respectively. And, with the progress of science, the increase of exegetical research, and the mutual reflections of prophecy and history, we may expect a series of devel-

sin unto death, for which we must not pray—because prayer can be of no avail. Now, it seems never to occur to inquirers that this must be a sin, of whose commission the evidence must be very clear and distinct. Are we not to pray for those who do despite to the Holy Ghost? Then we are never to pray at all for the unconverted. Are none of the unconverted brought to a saving knowledge of the truth? If they are, then their's is not, of course, the sin unto death. What this sin is it has been our endeavour in this article to show; and we are well persuaded that explanations such as that given by Dr. Chalmers, are calculated to throw an entire air of difficulty over the whole Bible; and by attempting to explain away particular parts, to render the whole gospel scheme uncertain.

ART. III.—*The Life and Remains of the Rev. Robert Housman, A. B., the Founder, and for forty years the Incumbent Minister of St. Anne's, Lancaster, and formerly Curate to the Rev. T. Robinson, M. A., of Leicester.* By Robert Fletcher Housman. Slightly abridged. New York: Robert Carter 58 Canal Street; 58 Market Street, Pittsburgh.

ONE good effect attends the publishing biographies of pious men, and especially of distinguished ministers; good people are encouraged and comforted by finding that there has been and is, more religion in the world than they had supposed, and more faithful men preaching the gospel than they ever dreamed of. Who, among us, for example, until now knew anything of such a man as the Rev. Robert Housman? And yet, as is abundantly evident from this volume, he was a man of uncommon excellence, and possessed preaching gifts surpassed by few of his contemporaries. And as he boldly preached the pure gospel of the grace of God, for more than forty years, he was the instrument of the conversion of many souls; and in the midst of enemies, and opposition from those in high places, courageously persevered in holding forth the word of life, in a part of the kingdom where evangelical preachers were few. He was also greatly beloved by the children of God, and numbered among his intimate friends,

some of the most excellent of the earth. We would strongly recommend our readers to get the volume and read for themselves; but as many may not have the opportunity to peruse this well prepared piece of biography, we will furnish a succinct account of this very excellent Christian, and useful minister.

The Rev. Robert Housman was born at Skerton, near Lancaster, England, Feb. 25, 1759. After attending the grammar school in Lancaster, which was under the tuition of the Rev. James Watson, he was bound apprentice to a surgeon; but finding this profession uncongenial with his disposition, he relinquished it before his apprenticeship was completed, and placed himself under the tuition of Mr. Watson, the second time, to prepare himself for an entrance into the holy university.

About this time he seems to have experienced some change in his religious views and feelings; but of this important part of his life, he has left no account. From this time, however, his mind was turned toward the sacred ministry. On a certain day he resorted to a grove which was near, and in a deliberate and solemn manner, accompanied with prayer, he dedicated himself to the service of God. His parents, especially his father, were resolutely opposed to the purpose which he had formed; but through the mediation of a sister, he succeeded in removing their opposition, and they both had the satisfaction of hearing their son preach, before they died.

Upon leaving Mr. Watson's school, he went to Cambridge, and entered as a sizer, into St. John's College, on the 17th March, 1780. In less than sixteen months after entering the university, Mr. Housman received deacon's orders, at a general ordination, from the hands of Markhem, archbishop of York. He now became curate to the Rev. Mr. Croft, of Gargram, in Yorkshire. Mr. Croft had taken lessons in elocution from Mr. Garrick, and was considered one of the finest readers in England, to which may probably be referred his own excellence in the management of his voice in the pulpit, both in reading and speaking. "Those who remember," says his biographer, "what the late venerable pastor of St. Anne's was, twenty or thirty years ago, or even at a much later period, will bear ready testimony to the finished beauty of his performance of the service of the established church of England, and to the chaste and peculiarly impressive delivery of his ministerial addresses." But alas! like many

others who assume the awful responsibilities of the sacred office, "he mistook decency for devotion, and a scrupulous avoidance of covert acts of evil, for vital Christianity. He was, in fact, though perfectly conscientious, and, if tested by the world's standard, unexceptionably moral, totally unacquainted with the design, the character, and the power of the gospel, as well as with the full extent and spirituality of the law." His own account of the matter, as given to his biographer, late in life, is as follows: "How little did I know, either of myself or others—how little of the nature of sin, or the nature of holiness, when I entered the church! I had always felt an earnest wish to be what is called *good*; and I vainly fancied, that the engagements of the ministry would afford, not only ample facilities, but adequate securities for the accomplishment of my desires. What deplorable ignorance! I knew nothing of the human heart. I had to learn that the root of sin lies *there*; and that unless that be changed, which it never can be, except by the renewing energies of the Holy Ghost, the best situation is worthless. There is, depend upon it, but one safe and suitable situation for all of us—THE FOOT OF THE CROSS. Of the cross I knew nothing but the name."

At another time, he made a similar confession: "I lived," said he, "through many a guilty year, as ignorant of the true character of the Saviour, as the beasts that perish, and as devoid of any right affection towards him as Satan himself. But *patience* reigned, and the curse did not come upon me. And *grace* has reigned, and I believe on the evidence of feelings that cannot betray me, that *now* the very first desire of my soul habitually is this—to perceive by a realizing faith, the Saviour's glory, to find his presence near, and to taste that he is gracious. What an advantage it is, when young people seek the Lord early."

Mr. Housman, after some time, returned to Cambridge, and received priest's orders from the hands of the bishop of Peterborough, on the 26th of October, 1783.

During his second residence at Cambridge, he contracted a very close and permanent intimacy with the Rev. Mr. Timson, by whom he was introduced to the family of Mr. Audley, who were highly respectable Independent Dissenters; a member of which, a young, beautiful, well educated and pious woman, became his wife in 1785. By this marriage Mr. Housman had one

son, whose birth the mother did not survive many weeks. She was spared great and protracted suffering, though she had faith and patience to endure any trial. Her brother, Mr. John Audley, of whom a memoir is published in the *Congregational Magazine*, for August, 1827, was a man of respectable talents, profound piety, diffusive benevolence, and untiring activity in the service of Jesus Christ. Between him and Mrs. Housman, the warmest attachment subsisted; her death affected him greatly; but his prayer, entered in his diary, is for "a sanctified use of the afflictive providence." Mr. Housman took his degree of bachelor of arts in 1784; beyond this he never proceeded.

It was not until after his return to Cambridge, that Mr. Housman became attached to what are distinctly designated evangelical principles. This change he constantly attributed to his acquaintance with the Rev. Charles Simeon. He was, indeed, Mr. Simeon's first convert, and was playfully called his "eldest son." His testimony to the Christian character and consistency of Mr. Simeon, deserves our notice; especially as on one occasion, he spent three months an inmate with this excellent man in his rooms in college. "Never," says he, "did I see such consistency and reality of Christian devotion and warmth of piety, such zeal and such love. Never did I see one who abounded so much in prayer. I owe that great and holy man a debt which never can be cancelled." Through the kindness of Mr. Simeon, Mr. Housman was introduced to the acquaintance of some of the most excellent men of the age. Among these was the venerable and highly gifted Henry Venn, who always took pleasure in attributing to Mr. Simeon his knowledge of the genuine doctrines of the gospel; and it is a tribute due to Mr. Simeon, to say, that he was the instrument of enkindling and extending evangelical religion in England, in a much greater degree than any other man. This he effected by his seeking the acquaintance of ingenuous young men of the university, who had the ministry in view, and leading them to just views of the great doctrines of Christianity; and also, by his preaching and his evangelical homiletics, by means of which, many were led to just views of truth, who at first only sought helps to the composition of their sermons.

The views of Mr. Housman respecting preaching the gospel, may be learned from a manuscript paper, which he wrote about this time, from which the following is an extract:

“The preaching of truth is owned of God; the preaching of error is left to itself. We read of a divine power and blessing accompanying the preaching of the gospel. It is written, ‘my word shall not return to me void.’ ‘Lo, I am with you always to the end of the world.’ The gospel came to the ‘Thessalonians, ‘not in word, but in power;’ and in every instance in which it bringeth salvation, it bringeth it through the power of God, applying the word to the soul. Now the Lord will never set his seal to error; but he *will* set his seal to the truth. I meddle not with others, I speak of myself. For upwards of two years after I entered the ministry, I preached mere moral discourses. I declaimed against sin; I recommended virtue; and I had the blindness and boldness to tell the people, that when they fell short, Christ would make up defects. Do you ask what was the effect produced? I answer, none. In no instance, and in no degree, was any ignorance removed, or any soul benefitted. But when, through the grace of God, I saw *clearly* the nature of the gospel of Christ, and was enabled simply to preach it, effects soon followed; effects have always followed, wherever I have been placed. In a greater or less degree, the blind have received their sight, drunkards have become sober, and profligates have learned to pray; the miserable have found peace, and immortal beings have found a blessed immortality. I have seen hundreds, perhaps thousands, drawing near to their last home, where the gospel was unknown or unfelt, I never saw an instance of that peace of which the Scriptures speak. But where Christ has been known, loved, and trusted, I have seen more than peace. I have seen death deprived of its sting, and the grave of its victory. I have seen sunshine and joy brightening the countenance, and the saint of God eager to be gone, to sing his praises before the throne forever. These effects, exactly agreeing with what the God of truth promises in his word, and I am confident, a stronger proof of what is truth, than if an angel were to appear and declare it.”

From having relied for acceptance on human merit, he was brought to depend upon the infinite sacrifice and eternal merit Christ *alone*. Good works, he perceived, could not constitute a passport to heaven; but still he held them to be indispensable as signs or tokens of a meetness for the enjoyment of heaven. “Works really good,” he was accustomed to say, “are nothing

else than holiness in exercise; and holiness, without which we are distinctly told, no man shall see the Lord, consists of principles, dispositions, and affections, springing from the grateful love for a divine Redeemer, and a pardoning God."

The following comprehensive and beautiful paragraph, will show the true character of Mr. Housman's system of theology as fully as a volume. "Nothing but the *blood* of Christ can save from destruction; nothing but the *righteousness* of Christ can give a title to heavenly bliss; nothing but the *intercession* of Christ can make prayers and duties acceptable; nothing but the *grace* of Christ can give a meetness for the inheritance and company of heaven, and nothing but the *presence* of Christ can be the light, joy, and glory of the eternal kingdom. Without Christ all is darkness, and ruin, and despair."

Mr. Housman's adoption of decidedly evangelical principles, may be attributed to two circumstances, ordered in Providence for his salvation and usefulness as a minister; the one was, his connexion by marriage with a Calvinistic family, remarkable for their devoted piety; the second was his intercourse with Messrs. Simeon and Venn, and also with Romaine, Newton, Scott, Beveridge, and other evangelical men. For with all those mentioned he enjoyed the privilege of free and frequent intercourse.

The summer and autumn of 1785, Mr. Housman spent in Lancaster, where he officiated at the afternoon service in St. John's church. Here he formed a society of young men, who met at his house on Sunday evening, for prayer and religious conversation. This innovation attracted attention, and gave offence to some; for hitherto, prayer meetings had been restricted to dissenters; information was given to the bishop of the diocese, respecting the practice; but he prudently declined interfering. Mr. Housman therefore, went on in his pious work, and an evident blessing attended these meetings.

After the death of his wife, which occurred in the winter of 1785, he determined to return to Cambridge; he therefore preached a farewell sermon at St. John's, in which he gave a comprehensive view of the doctrines of the gospel. This discourse gave great offence; especially what he said respecting the utter depravity of human nature; and the absolute inefficacy of good works to gain acceptance with God. Many of his hearers abruptly left the house, in the midst of the discourse.

As a clamour had been raised against the sermon, the preacher thought it expedient to publish it; which, however, drew forth a pamphlet in which it was assailed in a very angry style. To this pamphlet he returned no answer; but the Rev. George Burder, being then resident at Lancaster, thinking the pamphlet might do harm if unnoticed, prepared and published an able and temperate vindication of Mr. Housman's discourse. Against the delusive and dangerous doctrine of baptismal regeneration, Mr. Housman delivered a faithful testimony. His words are, "Many have been the attempts of the opposers of true religion, to set aside the necessity or disguise the nature of the great work of regeneration. As to those who deny its necessity, their denial must be ascribed to their own ignorance of God, of themselves, and of the Scriptures; and they who disguise its nature, generally call it baptism. But while we have the Bible in our hands, we need not scruple positively to assert, on the combined authority of innumerable isolated passages, and of the general scope of the New Testament records, that baptism is not regeneration. Baptism is an outward work on the body; regeneration is an inward work on the soul. Baptism, I grant, is a sacramental *sign* of regeneration, just as the Lord's Supper is a sacramental sign of the body and blood of Christ; and therefore baptism may be called regeneration, by the same figure which Christ used when he says of the bread, 'this is my body.' The outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace."

The occasion of Mr. Housman's removal was threatening symptoms of consumption, which made it necessary that he should seek a milder atmosphere.

Upon leaving Lancaster, Mr. Housman, in 1796 came to reside at Market Harborough, within four miles of which place he had a curacy, but he did not remain here much more than a year; but though greatly opposed by some of the principal people of the neighbourhood, his labours were greatly blessed. But having become acquainted with Mr. Robinson, of Leicester, the author of "Scripture Character," he was invited by that excellent man to act as his curate, which he did for twelve months. In this large parish he had full employment, not only in the pulpit, but in other pastoral duties, in which he took his full share. It was here he became acquainted with the Rev. Thomas Scott, the author of the judicious and useful commentary on the Bible. Here

also he formed an acquaintance with Mrs. Adams, who soon afterwards became his second wife. This lady possessed a masculine understanding, and was the author of a very popular tract entitled, "Susan Ward." The clergyman mentioned in the tract, as the instrument of bringing this ignorant woman to the knowledge of Christ, was no other than Mr. Housman. Mrs. Housman had received a truly religious education, and had been for some time a pupil of Mr. Robinson. Her mother, whose maiden name was Bateman, had in her youth suffered persecution for her attachment to the gospel. Her father, who was an irreligious and worldly man, upon learning the inclination which his daughter had to the people called Methodists, told her that she was free to choose for herself, but if she joined these people he would certainly disinherit her. She took time for consideration, consultation, and prayer; the result of which was, that she resolved to obey her heavenly rather than her earthly father. When she made known her purpose to her father, he gave her a shilling, and turned her out of doors, and commanded her never to let him see her face again. The Countess of Huntington, so celebrated for her piety and evangelical labours, having heard the circumstances, sent for Miss Batemen, and took her as a companion and friend into her own house, where she remained until she entered into the matrimonial state with the Rev. Mr. Adams. From correspondence inserted in this volume, it appears that Mrs. Adams continued to enjoy the warm friendship of Lady Huntington; and also of the many excellent and distinguished persons who frequented the house of this extraordinary woman.

Trained by such a mother, and accustomed from her infancy to the society of the excellent of the earth, Mrs. Housman possessed a character for exemplary piety and prudence. But like many other persons of sterling worth, it required an acquaintance of some intimacy to know her worth. She was not a noisy or an ostentatious Christian, but sincere, devoted, and ever active in doing good. An opportunity of doing good assumed in her eyes the nature of an obligation. From morning to night, the year through, she was about on her Father's business; performing her duty in a spirit of entire devotement, and in entire dependence on divine aid. "A quick imagination, great candour of heart and mind, uncompromising honesty of purpose, and determined will to execute it, fitted her in no uncommon degree, for

her numerous self-incurred and often harassing engagements; while a more than ordinary skill in discriminating minute and subtle differences of character protected her from the various artifices to which religious people are so peculiarly exposed. To Mr. Housman in his ministerial character she proved invaluable. Profoundly respecting her principles, her understanding, and her judgment, he proposed to her all his doubts, and consulted her in all his difficulties; and without her sanction he did nothing. She possessed great influence over his mind, which she exerted with unrelaxing consistency for the glory of God, and the happiness of men. How immensely the cause of pure and undefiled religion is indebted to the energetic instrumentality of this admirable woman, will be proclaimed with honour, when the "Lord Jehovah maketh up his jewels."

In the year 1792, Mr. Housman undertook the rectorship of the large and ancient church of Leicester, where he was attended by a numerous and respectable audience, who received the word at his mouth with apparent satisfaction. But though his voice was clear and sweet, it had scarcely power sufficient to fill that large church. He next became curate to Mr. Ludlam, at Faston, a small village seven miles from Leicester. To this he was accustomed to walk every Sunday morning, and having performed the service, to return again to Leicester and preach at St. Martin's in the evening. The people of Faston were so attached to his ministry, that many of them, regularly attended his afternoon services at St. Martin's. While resident at Leicester, Mr. Housman preached a series of discourses on the names and titles, given in scripture to JESUS CHRIST, which were published in 1793. About this time, he published also, a very eloquent discourse on the subject of Christian benevolence, before the Governors of the Leicester Infirmary and Lunatic Asylum. The thanks of the society were conveyed to him for this excellent discourse, and it was printed at their expense, in quarto form. Bishop Tomline, also his diocesan, complimented him handsomely, for this discourse.

But though Mr. Housman acquired a high reputation as a preacher at Leicester, and though his evangelical labours were signally blessed to the salvation of many, it is believed, both there and at Faston; yet, as his symptoms of pulmonary disease had disappeared, his inclination led him strongly to his native place. And on a visit to his parents with his wife, in 1794, he

formed the purpose of attempting to erect a new church in the city of Lancaster. Having received the approbation of Dr. Warren, the diocesan, and of Mr. White, the vicar of Lancaster, in December, of this year, he issued his proposals for a new church. But the feeling of opposition which had been excited by his farewell sermon, was far from being extinct; for no sooner was the design to erect a new church made known, than a meeting of the most wealthy and influential inhabitants was convened in the Town Hall, to consider of the propriety of erecting a new church or chapel in the place. This was manifestly intended to thwart Mr. Housman's purpose. But though he was a timid, retiring man by nature, yet he possessed much moral courage; and when he knew that he was engaged in a righteous cause, he disregarded the opposition of worldly and wicked men. He, therefore, determined to go forward with his scheme, and to encourage those who had expressed a willingness to embark in this enterprize, he wrote and published an animating "Address to the gentlemen who have encouraged the design of building a new church, to be called St. Anne's, in Lancaster." In this address, Mr. Housman defends himself against the calumnies and reproaches of his enemies. They not only accused him of preaching antinomian doctrines, but they inconsistently charged him with being "righteous over-much," and to crown all, they accused him of being a METHODIST. At the first meeting of the opposers of his enterprize, four thousand pounds were subscribed for their new church, for a certain Mr. Colton; but notwithstanding this spirited beginning, the church was never built; yet the spirit of opposition did not cease with the abandonment of their design. Indeed, there is reason to believe, that their only object in starting the scheme was to intimidate Mr. Housman and his friends; but when they failed in this, they, without apparent cause, relinquished the whole affair. Two clergymen of Lancaster were among the bitterest of his opposers; who, when they could not arrest the progress of the building, applied to the bishop to induce him to refuse to license St. Anne's, but they utterly failed of their object; for the bishop had already given his approbation to the measure, and even approved the sermon which had produced all this hostility. Mr. Housman in building St. Anne's, had the assistance of many distinguished men. Mr. Wilberforce contributed twenty pounds, and Mr. Thornton fifty;

and he received encouragement and aid from Mr. Simeon and Mr. Robinson, of Leicester. That Mr. Wilberforce entertained a high esteem for Mr. Housman, is manifest from a single sentence in one of his letters. "It is," says he, "abundantly sufficient for me to know that Mr. Housman approves the scheme. His approbation is a satisfactory guarantee." And the regard was mutual, for Mr. Housman says, "'The Practical View of Christianity,' after the Bible, deserves the serious perusal of those who would see on the one hand, a complete exposure of some prevailing and destructive errors, in the religious system of many professed Christians; and those who, on the other, would obtain a clear and consistent view of real holiness, flowing from its legitimate and only source, the doctrines and principles of the gospel."

Before returning to Lancaster, Mr. Housman had frequently indulged in extempore preaching, in which he is said to have been uncommonly successful. This practice he was obliged to lay aside in deference to the absurd prejudices of his townsmen. His biographer relates an amusing anecdote, respecting the circumstances of his first preaching without notes. Being on a visit to the Rev. Mr. Glazebrook, of Warrington, this gentleman urged him to lay aside his paper, and after full meditation, to venture to speak what he had prepared. He, however, pleaded unconquerable timidity. But on a certain occasion, when he was going into the pulpit, Mrs. Glazebrook contrived to abstract the written sermon from his pocket; but she was terribly frightened when she saw him rise to read the hymn, immediately before the sermon, for she saw that his countenance was very much flushed and disconcerted. But after reading his text, he seemed to acquire composure, and went on and preached an admirable and searching discourse. The experiment, however, was a dangerous one. In Lancaster, while he was beloved by the pious, he was hated and despised by the principal men of the place; so that when walking the streets, if they saw him approaching they would cross over to the other side. And on occasion of an Episcopal visitation, the charge being on the evils of enthusiasm, the clergy stood aloof from him, and avoided every token of friendly recognition.

Some years after his permanent residence in Lancaster, he published a beautiful sermon on the "new creation." This af-

forded abundant merriment to his clerical brethren; and on one occasion, one of them scoffingly read aloud what he called "Housman's Creation," amid peals of laughter from the company. This obloquy extended to his congregation, and it was common to call St. Anne's, "the hotbed of dissent." In addition to his popular pulpit talents, Mr. Housman possessed in an unusual degree, the talent for religious conversation; or what Dr. Watts calls, "Parlour Preaching." The late truly excellent Mrs. Dawson, testifies, that Mr. Housman could make an exclusively religious conversation more attractive, and sustain it longer, than any of the eminent men with whom she was conversant in her early days. "Whereas," says Mr. Stator, "in Christians of an ordinary standard religious conversation might seem to be the effect of labour and self-denial, in Mr. Housman it was just the reverse. He could not but speak of the things which he had seen and heard. What was labour to others, was pleasure and relaxation to him. If privileged to enter his retirement, you found yourself in a new and heavenly atmosphere. In listening to the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth, you felt yourself in the company of one who had fellowship and intercourse with heaven. In the depth and tone of his spiritual feelings, he had few equals, and no superiors, in our day. There were times, indeed, when his friends observed that his mind would seem to labour beneath the weight of his conceptions. And it was pleasing to observe, that when his mental powers began to fail, this 'unction of the Holy One,' still remained. In this respect he resembled the aged apostle John, who when he could say no more, would still repeat the exhortation, 'little children, love one another.'"

Though Mr. Housman possessed the talent for religious conversation in so eminent a degree, yet in his common intercourse with men, he had the appearance of reserve; and he did not spend much of his time in pastoral visitation, because he was of opinion, that the main usefulness of a pastor depends on his preparation for the pulpit. Those ministers, who for the sake of frequent visits to their people, neglect preparation for the pulpit, in his opinion, commit a serious mistake. When on this subject, he was fond of relating an anecdote of a poor Scotchman, who being asked, whether his minister frequently visited the members of his flock, answered, "he lives in heaven all the

week, and on the Sabbath he comes down and tells us what he has seen and heard." But in visiting the sick, especially those of the poorer classes, he was most exemplary. He would go out on this errand, in the darkest, coldest, and stormiest night of the winter. He was also frequent in visiting the unhappy inmates of the prison, and in order to have free access to them accepted the office of justice of the peace.

The enmity of his opposers seemed to be incapable of being overcome. It broke out afresh, when any occasion occurred which was suited to call it forth. To promote piety and Christian fellowship, Mr. Housman compiled a small Hymn Book. This was treated as not only a gross impropriety, but an impious act. To forsake Hopkins and Sternhold, which their fathers had sung, for those novelties, they represented as an intolerable innovation. And not content with censuring the Hymn Book themselves, they made complaint to the diocesan bishop, who having no more liking to evangelical hymns than themselves, advised, that the use of the book should be discontinued.

To show how much our religious liberty should be prized, which we so richly enjoy in this land, it may be for edification to give a somewhat particular account of the persecution endured by the Rev. Wm. Carus Wilson, rector of Whittington, as it will at the same time show the fidelity, and tender sympathy exercised by Mr. Housman towards his suffering friend. This young gentleman had received deacon's orders; but on application to Dr. Law, bishop of Chester, for priest's orders, he was refused, on account of some Calvinistic opinions which he held. And shortly afterwards, for the same reason, his license to preach was taken away, and he was suspended from the ministerial functions. As Mr. Housman entertained the highest opinion of Mr. Wilson's piety, and had formed a tender friendship for him, he was greatly pained and deeply distressed by this unchristian treatment; and especially as the vilest slanders against the young man, were industriously circulated. He, therefore, prepared a statement for the gazette, of which the following is an extract. This publication was signed VERITAS. "A regard not only to the honoured individual who is calumniated in his absence, but to circumstances far more imperious than the partialities of friendship, compel me to correct the cruel misrepresentation. It is affirmed amongst us, that it is Mr. Wilson's

opinion, 'that if a person can only once persuade himself that his state is safe for eternity, he may indulge in the grossest sins, without fear or danger.' If there could be only ten men found in the United Kingdom, who, with true religious sensibility would shudder with abhorrence, at the first mention of such an abominable position, among the foremost of the ten would appear my very excellent friend." He then draws a portrait of Mr. Wilson's character, as a preacher and as a Christian. "In the pulpit, Mr. Wilson was plain, faithful, earnest, and affectionate. His whole manner was an echo to an apostle's declaration, 'I seek not yours, but you.' He collected the children of the parish to the amount of one hundred, and formed a Sunday School in his own house, where he and his friends were the willing and assiduous teachers. That he might preserve the Sabbath from violation, he received into his house on the morning of that day, the young men from the village, where he endeavoured to improve them in reading, and in the knowledge of their several duties to God and to man. He was also attentive to the temporal distresses of his people, and had formed excellent plans for the permanent comfort of the poor. He considered the parish as his extended family, and his thoughts, his time, his purse, and his heart, were devoted to their service. He was their prudent counsellor, their kind friend, and their upright pastor. He is followed by their benedictions, and their tears, and his name will remain fragrant among them—perhaps to distant generations."

This letter produced the desired effect—the triumph of his enemies, in this gazette, though continued up to the very day of its publication, suddenly ceased. On which Mr. Housman makes this important practical remark. "People seldom reply to facts, if these facts are stated with proper temper and strict regard to truth." In a letter addressed to Mr. Wilson, Mr. Housman says, "I desire to be thankful and to rejoice, that you have mercies as well as trials. The peace of God in your soul and domestic prosperity without, are a very gracious counterbalance indeed, to the sufferings which you are called to endure. I suppose, before this reaches you, you will have heard from the bishop. I do not expect much that is favourable. However, if his plans be not the Lord's, they will be strangely overruled."

Soon afterwards, Mr. Wilson was ordained to the vicarage of Gunstal. In a letter to Mrs. Wilson, Mr. Housman writes, "I

hope that you will soon receive back your husband, commissioned and fully authorized by man to preach the everlasting gospel. He long since received his commission from the exalted Redeemer. And what an account have they to give by whom the execution of that commission was suspended! William has been more calumniated in Lancaster than anywhere else—I wish him to preach his first sermon in my pulpit.” In a sympathizing letter to Mr. Wilson, occasioned by a severe domestic affliction, he writes, “You are all in the furnace, but purification, everlasting purification, will be the issue. And then what a mercy, to have such occasion, from the states of mind in which your dear sisters are preserved, to mingle hallelujahs with sighs.”

In the year 1816, Mr. Housman published the first number of “The Pastoral Visitor,” or a “Summary of “Christian Doctrine and Practice.” This he prefaced by an affectionate address to the congregation of St. Anne’s, from which we take the following extract, which may serve as a specimen of the author’s spirit and style.

“MY DEAR FRIENDS—The shadows of the evening are drawing fast around me. Increasing years and a feeble constitution concur in reminding me, that the time cannot be far distant, when the place which knoweth me must know me no more. But the moments which are hurrying forward, the hour of our final separation, find me, if I mistake not, more and more anxious that you *all* may obtain salvation, by our Lord Jesus Christ. I seem to perceive with more affecting clearness than ever, the straitness and the difficulties of the way to eternal life; and that, between the favour and the wrath of God, between a soul saved and a soul lost forever, there is a difference which nothing but the experience of eternity can explain. Under these views and impressions, it is my intention, so long as I am continued among you, to place in your hands, at the close of each succeeding quarter of a year, a *plain* discourse upon some important subject. The doctrines which may be stated, explained, and applied, are those which you have heard for nearly twenty years. I am well persuaded that they are the doctrines of the established church, and I have evidence also, which cannot deceive, that they are the truths of the gospel of Christ. That evidence is nothing less than the seal and witness of the living God. He has borne the testimony of his approbation to the preaching of ‘Christ

crucified.' He has fulfilled the promise that his word shall not return to him void. He has given the increase."

Of this work, only sixteen numbers were ever published; barely enough to make a single volume. He was averse to the care and pains necessary in preparing works for the press, and therefore he relinquished a publication which promised considerable pecuniary profit; and many of his best discourses remain in manuscript. The following evangelical sentiments are from one of these. "The foundation for a sinner is the foundation of God. It is written, 'The foundation of God standeth sure.' If we compare Isaiah xxviii. 16, with 1 Pet. ii. 6, who, and what in the strong sense of the word, is that *foundation*. It is Jesus, the Son of God: Jesus dying and rising from the dead: Jesus, magnifying the law, and enduring its curse: Jesus, undertaking to bring many sons into glory, and to bring much glory to every perfection of his Father. Jesus is the foundation, and the foundation of God. He is the foundation of God—for the *wisdom* of God in the everlasting counsels, planned the wonderful redemption. He is the foundation of God, for the *love* of the Father, gave, as the Saviour of sinners, his only-begotten Son. This is the foundation of God—for by the authority and appointment of the Father, other foundation never has been laid, and never will be laid. Upon this foundation are you resting and building?"

From the year 1816, Mr. Housman's health began evidently to give way; and in the year 1818, he began to think of resigning his important charge, and retiring to some small parish in the country; and as soon as his wishes were known, he had the offer of such a situation; but he found it more difficult to separate from his people of St. Anne's, than he expected; and he declined the offer of another parish.

Soon after his settlement in Lancaster, Mr. Housman purchased a place, which he improved, and to which he was much attached; but pecuniary embarrassments, not brought on by any imprudence of his own, now in his declining age, made it necessary to dispose of this beloved spot. While here, he was subjected to many bereavements and heart-rending afflictions, all which he bore with meek and uncomplaining submission and patience. "In him," says Mr. Statter, his friend, "patience may be said to have had its perfect work. He not only endured, as

seeing Him that is invisible, but he gloried in tribulation. His faith, as his people can tell, always came from the furnace, as gold seven times purified. There he learnt his choicest lessons of heavenly wisdom. Thence he was so well able to comfort the mourners, to strengthen the weak, to confirm the wavering, to guard the tempted, and to raise the fallen." In one of his sorest trials, he writes to a friend, "I have been in a hotter furnace than I ever was before; but I humbly trust that the form of him who walked with me was that of the Son of God. . . . Oh! that I could tell you the thousandth part of the exceeding peace and gladness of my soul, as I lay awake in the stillness and darkness of the past night." Of a truth, the Lord was with me. I think I never before had such a sense of the greatness, and purity, and loveliness, and glory of God in Christ. My heart was enlarged in a very uncommon degree, and if I mistake not, in a very uncommon way. Jesus was felt to be 'Immanuel,' with peculiar power." A few weeks afterwards, he writes, "Within the last three or four days, I have had *such* views of the glory and excellence of Jesus! I have seemed to see more into it than ever. There is no true happiness in this world, but in the nearness of the soul to Christ; there is no happiness in the eternal state, but seeing the Lord as he is, and being like him forever. The beatific vision is CHRIST. We shall all see him as he is, in the perfection and glory of his character. We shall be like him, in the perfection and glory of our own." Many of his letters, in this volume, are replete with the same sentiments which breathe in the above extracts. They cannot be read by the Christian without sensible refreshment and encouragement.

Mr. Housman continued in charge of St. Anne's, until the year 1836, when finding the infirmities of age rapidly increasing on him, he in a respectful letter made application to his diocesan to resign the parish into the hands of a Mr. Levingston, of whom he gave a high character. His request being granted, he now retired to Greenfield. But his afflictions were not ended, for here, in 1837, he was deprived of his second wife, who had ever been a helper, comforter, and prudent counsellor. This stroke he considered the heaviest which he had ever borne. But he had not long to mourn the loss; for in the following year the summons came for him to join his departed friends. He died in peace,

surrounded by his affectionate children and faithful friends. His decease occurred on the 22d of April, 1838. His remains were interred in Skerton, near Lancaster, on the 27th. A great crowd attended his funeral, mostly dressed in black. The funeral service was performed conjointly, by the Rev. Charles Bury, and Rev. Henry O'Neill; and a handsome tablet with a suitable inscription, was placed in the wall of St. Anne's.

From the preceding narrative, the character of the Rev. Mr. Housman, as a Christian, and as an evangelical and eloquent preacher will be readily understood. We shall, therefore, conclude our account, by a few short extracts from the volume under review, relating to his person and manners.

"The personal appearance of Mr. Housman was exceedingly prepossessing. His forehead was high and nobly expanded; his nose and mouth were beautifully moulded; his eyes—the colour of which was the lightest and most perfect blue—were soft, tender, bright, and placid; the prevalent and habitual expression of his countenance was that of seraphic thoughtfulness—the radiant and unruffled contemplativeness of a heart full of faith, love, and hope, and of the peace which passeth all understanding. His aspect presented the infallible indication of a Sabbath within. . . . It was impossible to see him without thinking of what Christ said of Nathanael, 'Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile.' . . . His voice, never of any great compass—was full, clear, well modulated, and manly. Solemnity and sweetness were its main characteristics. His stature was about five feet nine inches; his body thin, though not slight; being well proportioned; and his general deportment, until bowed down and enfeebled with the weight of nearly eighty years—was easy, dignified, and graceful. In his disposition he was uniformly cheerful and sometimes even gay. His manners were those of a man of education, and social advantages—gentle and unobtrusive; yet always distinguished by the attribute of moral greatness." To strangers, however, he was reserved; and disliked very much to be entrapped into the company of such persons as were not of a congenial disposition. Though naturally timid, he yet possessed a large share of moral courage, and was unflinching in a good cause. In him it was manifest that meekness is not inconsistent with intrepidity. Nothing could daunt him, when he felt that he was right.

Upon the whole, we would remark, that from the character given of Mr. Housman, in this volume, though some allowance may be made for the partiality of the biographer, yet it is evident, that he was a clergyman of rare accomplishments. Although he did not possess the very highest order of intellectual powers, yet his mind was well balanced; and all his faculties were of that kind which qualified him for eminent usefulness. We could wish and pray that the church might be supplied with many ministers exactly of his mould. His life, though protracted, was useful and comfortable to its close.

ART. IV.—*General Assembly.*

THE General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America met, agreeably to appointment, in the Tent, Presbyterian Church, in the city of Philadelphia, on Thursday, the 21st day of May, 1846, at 11 o'clock, A. M., and was opened with a sermon by the Rev. John M. Krebs, D.D., Moderator of the last Assembly, from Galatians vi. 14: "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

After the sermon, the Assembly was constituted with prayer. The Permanent Clerk, from the Standing Committee of Commissions, reported the names of persons entitled to be enrolled as commissioners.

Title of Bishop.

When the roll was read in the afternoon of the first day of the sessions of the Assembly, Dr. R. J. Breckinridge moved that the word Bishop be struck out in every case where it was applied to the clerical delegates, and that the word minister be substituted in its place. This motion prevailed by a large majority. With regard to the title Bishop, there are certain points as to which all parties may be considered as substantially agreed. One is that in the New Testament, the title is given to those officers in the Church who are appointed to rule, teach, and ordain. Another is, that the terms Presbyter and Bishop are applied