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ARTICLE I.—*History of the Old Covenant.* By J. H. Kurtz, Ord. Prof. at Dorpat.* Vol. II. 1855. 8vo. pp. 563.

THE first volume of this work traced the history of Israel as a family to its close in the death of Jacob, their last common progenitor. The next period regards Israel as a nation, and, according to the epochs marked by our author, extends to the establishment of the kingdom. This period is divided into four unequal parts, severally represented by the residence in Egypt, the wanderings in the wilderness, the conquest of Canaan, and the residence in Canaan. Each of these has its own distinctly marked character and aim. First, the family was to expand to a nation and to attain a separate and independent existence. Secondly, they must receive their national form and constitution; they are not to be like other nations, but God's peculiar people. Hence he concludes a covenant with them and provides them with their code of laws. Thirdly, in order to realize the destiny thus set before them, and to develop themselves in their newly imparted character, they need to come into the possession of a suitable land. Fourthly,

* Geschichte des Alten Bundes, von Joh. Heinr. Kurtz, u. s. w. Berlin, New York und Adelaide.

narii, it is stated, John vi. 7, would have purchased bread enough for five thousand people. According to John xii. 3-5, a pound of ointment of spikenard was worth three hundred *denarii*; a statement confirmed by Pliny, who speaks of cinnamon-ointment costing from twenty-five to three hundred *denarii*, and of the ointment of spikenard as being of about the same price. At Athens, a *cotyla* (less than a pound) of expensive oriental ointment is spoken of as worth from five hundred to one thousand *drachmæ*. Two sparrows are said (Mat. x. 29) to cost an *as*, and five (Luke xii. 6) to cost two *asses*, the price being cheapened as a larger quantity was taken. The *quadrans* or quarter *as*, is twice referred to, Mat. v. 26 (where it is paralleled to the *lepton*, Luke xii. 59) and Mark xii. 42. The widow's mite (*lepton*) is thought to be equal to the *quadrans*, not the half of it, as this latter passage is sometimes explained.

The discussion presented in this volume of the imaginary coins of the Bible (talents and minæ) and particularly that regarding the prices of various articles which are there mentioned, is very interesting, but we cannot enter upon it here.

ART. IV.—*Sketches of Virginia, Historical and Biographical.*

By the Rev. William Henry Foote, D. D., Pastor of the Presbyterian Church, Romney, Va. Second Series. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co. 1855. Pp. 596, 8vo.

EXACTLY six years have elapsed, since we took occasion to say, that Dr. Foote had, by his first series of Sketches, made an offering of inestimable value to our Church. Not only will we not retract this judgment, but we hasten to renew it in favour of the volume before us. Of general remark there is the less left us to make, since what we had to say on the foregoing volume. The characteristics of both are the same; and we observe now, as before, the author's industrious quest of facts; his faithful transcription of authorities; his careful preservation of minute, and often unique fragments; and his perpetual love and zeal

for our common country, and our beloved Church. If, in some instances, the accumulation of crude facts and dates constitutes rather memoirs to serve for history, than digested history itself; even this is a work which we cannot do without, and which few are both able and willing to undertake. We thank him for his pious care, and again express our gratification that opinions so favourable to Scotch Presbyterians and Virginians should proceed from a son of New England. May it be an augury of Christian alliance never to be broken.

The volume now published is very largely taken up with the churches and ministers of the Valley of Virginia. The author has not chosen to call it an Ecclesiastical History, and in this we approve his judgment. The liberty which he allows himself, permits him to divert from the highway of church affairs in numerous episodes, which we should be sorry to miss. Though most of the ground traversed in this series is altogether new, it happens, in a few instances, that the line dropped in the other volume is taken up here; but we observe no repetition. The venerable Presbytery of Hanover, of course occupies a leading place in these annals. In 1758, it included, with one exception, all the ministers south of the Potomac, in connection with the two Synods which were then united. Dr. Foote gives an account of these ministers in detail. Some of the biographies are very striking; and among these we would indicate those of Daniel Rice, James Mitchel, and James Turner. The foundation of Presbyterian churches in Kentucky and Tennessee naturally comes in for its share of notice.

The progress of religion is closely connected with the early religious life of the Rev. Mr. Mitchel, who lived to be a patriarch among the churches. He belonged to a hardy stock, and by uniting severe exercise and fresh air with ministerial work, preserved his vigour to a very advanced age. Thirty years ago, and long before we had addressed ourselves to the work of reviewing, we formed part of a cavalcade, on the return from a sacramental gathering, at which Mr. Mitchel was the chief speaker. All were mounted, and as we rode through the summer woodlands, fifteen miles, on our way to Lynchburg, the good old man, then in his eightieth year, was one of the most agile of the party, and he lived to preach the gospel fifteen years

longer. As we are happy in the belief that neither various learning nor commanding eloquence is indispensable to great usefulness in the ministry, we can readily conceive how this sound, pious, and laborious servant of God, should be a blessing to the land in which he lived. He was by some years the senior, and so the adviser, of that group of ministers who came out of the great awakening by which the close of the century was signalized; Alexander, Calhoun, Hill, Baxter, and the Lyles.

Very different was this good man's colleague, James Turner of Bedford. There is a pleasure in reflecting how many mighty preachers there have been, whose names have never become widely famous: in regard to this, much that Mr. Wirt says of the Blind Preacher might be said of Turner. He was one of the orators of nature, or yet more truly, of grace. We have often heard such accounts of him from the lips of the late Dr. Alexander as cause us to believe that, in his moments of inspiration, Mr. Turner was nowise inferior to Patrick Henry or James Waddel. Having been notorious for wild and wicked sports, such as prevail in the barbarous frontiers of new countries, he was suddenly converted, and straightway became a Boanerges. The account given by Dr. Foote is interesting throughout, but too long for insertion. We give a portion:

"In 1784, the Rev. James Mitchel became pastor of the Peaks Church. Under his ministry, Bedford enjoyed repeated revivals. In the year 1789, the Rev. Drury Lacy preached repeatedly in the congregation of Mr. Mitchel. Multitudes were attracted to the place of meeting—among them Mr. Turner. While walking around the place of worship, and standing in the shade talking with his companions, the sweet, clear-toned voice of Lacy, fresh from the excitements and religious exercises of Prince Edward, caught his ear. He could not resist its charms; drawing nearer to enjoy its music, some sentences of gospel truth arrested his mind. He drew still nearer to hear what such a man would say on religion. When the congregation was dismissed, and the inquirers were seeking instruction from the ministers, Mr. Turner with an aching heart turned homewards. Strange thoughts passed through his mind, sad feelings possessed his soul, unusual sorrows pressed on his

heart, melancholy forebodings overwhelmed him. He could neither drive these things away, nor fly from them. He was wretched and forlorn. He thought sometimes he was about to die; and sometimes that perhaps he too would become religious like the new converts he had heard of in other places. Home had no comfort for him.

“When his sufferings became intolerable, he mounted his horse to seek his mother, and ask her sympathy and advice. The arrested man thought of the instructions of his childhood, and in the time of his distress fled to his mother’s bosom. With great simplicity he told her his feelings about himself, and God, and religion, and death; and inquired what he should do in his strange case. To his utter surprise, his mother, instead of expressing sympathy or giving counsel, exclaimed with tears — ‘My son! this is the very thing for which I have prayed for years!’ She then broke forth in ascriptions of praise and thanksgiving to Almighty God, for his wonderful mercy in bringing her son under conviction. He stood and wondered if his mother had gone crazy. Her rejoicing added to his grief. Knowing his characteristic fondness and honesty, his mother did not for a moment doubt the reality of her son’s convictions; she believed the strong man armed was seized by one stronger than he; and she rejoiced in his convictions and sorrow of heart, as the forerunners of peace in believing. When her first gush of joy was passed, she gave the counsel a Christian mother might give her son. He attended preaching, sought instruction, went to prayer-meetings, prayed in private, and read the word of God. Wearisome days and sleepless nights passed before he could find rest to his soul. He could make no excuse for his sins; and saw he deserved the worst from the hands of God. In receiving mercy, if ever he did, it seemed to him some mark ought to be set upon him, in memory of the past.

“Hearing the subject of the new birth set forth, he was fully convinced of its truth and importance; and in his own case of its immediate necessity. And believing, as he afterwards related, that the new birth was attended with an agony of mind beyond anything he had felt, and that in his case particularly, it ought to be so, he stood, literally stood in the corner of the room, where the services were that evening conducted, desiring,

praying, waiting, for that untold agony of mind and body, which should precede spiritual life. He went away from the meeting alarmed, that not only had he not felt the expected agony, but had lost the distress he had been sinking under, and was becoming calm. He thought of the Lord Jesus Christ as the sinner's friend; and his soul broke forth in praise of him for his wonderful ways to the children of men. He felt he loved him; and yet could scarce believe that such a wretch as he had been, could love him, or be loved by him. He knew not what to do. But as he meditated the tide of feeling became resistless. The mouth once filled with songs of revelry, now spoke God's praise in no measured numbers; and he that had urged others, even preachers, to sin, now most earnestly exhorted them to repent and believe in Jesus." * * * *

"Mr. Turner had great power to move assemblies. He had been unequalled in producing mirth. His few efforts in the legislature led others to anticipate, what he did not think possible, success as a public speaker, on grave subjects. His exhortations in prayer meetings produced effects that revealed to himself his own powers. He preached for years to a congregation embracing many very intelligent and many shrewd people; and the influence of his oratory was neither weak nor transient, nor wanted novelty to give it effect. Impressed himself, he impressed others. His great physical strength permitted him to pour forth a current of feeling that would have destroyed a weaker body. The gentle flow of his own bosom, or the rapid torrent of his excited passion, swept his audience along with unresisted influence. He carefully studied his subjects; and sometimes made notes of thoughts and arguments, and proofs and texts, but never wrote out a sermon in full, and generally made no written preparation. The commencement of his discourse was generally in a low voice, in an easy, unpretending, conversational style and manner, without any promise. His train of thought was good, arranged in a plain, simple, common sense way, so natural the hearer would be inclined to think he would have arranged it in the same way, and that it cost no effort in the preparation, and was so plain everybody ought to see it. The outbreak of feeling was unpremeditated, and equally unexpected by himself and audience. He, in common

with the hearers, seemed confident that the subject prepared would excite him; but in what part of the sermon, or in what particular channel the torrent would run, he neither knew nor desired to know till the moment came, and then he revelled in the delicious excitement. If the inspiration did not come upon him, and the spring of feeling was not opened, he went mourning from the pulpit, but the audience always had a good sermon, one satisfactory if it were not known that he could do better. His preaching hours were generally seasons of delight; often of the highest enjoyment. On some well prepared, important subject of the gospel, his imagination taking fire, his heart melting, his tones and gestures and words were graphic; and his hearers saw and felt, and rejoiced with him."

We take it for granted that no one of our readers will expect us to follow this excellent and very copious work into its details. It would not be proper for us even to name the churches and the men, who come in for description. The very fulness prevents this; a fulness which in a memoir of this kind we highly commend. Better is it to have an occasional excess of anecdote or correspondence, than to lay down a curt and meager epitome with dissatisfaction, when we looked for knowledge. This, we say, is true of books which open the quarry of original facts; later historians may hew and polish, and build into more select and comprehensive structures. Hence, we are pleased with the ample sketches of such men as Hill, Allen, Rice, Baxter, McPheeters, and Speece. In regard to the last mentioned, we take this occasion to say, from our own recollections, and from the more valuable testimony of those whom we most revere, that he deserved all the praise which is here given. Of all the gifted and in some instances truly learned men named in Dr. Foote's volumes, there is certainly no one more admirable in his singularity than Dr. Speece. If his numerous letters could be collected, they would be as remarkable for their caligraphy as their terseness. But he was one of those great conversers who never do themselves justice with the pen. In writing he seemed always chilled and fettered by his cautious observance of classic purity and propriety in his English; in free discourse, as he rode among the mountains, or kept his companions awake all night, he was exuber-

ant, strong, and original. From the hugeness of his frame, and a certain peremptory utterance of his well-weighed periods, he was not seldom compared to Dr. Johnson. The estimate of his character by the late Dr. Alexander, is worthy of preservation.

“When I came to reside at that place (the College,) I found him there; and from this time our intercourse was constant and intimate as long as I remained in the State; and our friendship then contracted continued to be uninterrupted to the day of his death. It is probable, therefore, that no other person has had better opportunities of knowing his characteristic features than myself; and yet I find it difficult to convey to others a correct view of the subject. 1st. One of the most obvious traits of mental character at this period, was independence; by which I mean a fixed purpose to form his own opinions, and to exercise on all proper occasions, entire freedom in the expression of them. He seems very early to have determined not to permit his mind to be enslaved to any human authority, but on all subjects within his reach, to think for himself. He possessed, in an eminent degree, that moral courage or firmness of mind, which leaves a man at full liberty to examine and judge, in all matters connected with human duty or happiness. But though firm and independent, he was far from being precipitate either in forming or expressing his opinions. He knew how to exercise that species of self-denial, so difficult to most young men, of suspending his judgment on any subject, until he should have the opportunity of contemplating it in all its relations. He was ‘swift to hear and slow to speak.’ No one I believe ever heard him give a crude or hasty answer to any question which might be proposed. Careful deliberation uniformly preceded the utterance of his opinions. This unyielding independence of mind, and slow and cautious method of speaking, undoubtedly rendered his conversation at first less interesting, than that of many other persons; and his habit of honestly expressing the convictions of his own mind, prevented him from seeking to please his company by accommodating himself to their tastes and opinions. Indeed, to be perfectly candid, there was in his manners, at this period, less of the graceful and conciliatory character than was desirable.

He appeared, in fact, to be too indifferent to the opinions of others; and with exception of a small circle of intimate friends, manifested no disposition to cultivate the acquaintance, or seek the favour of men. This was undoubtedly a fault; but it was one which had a near affinity to a sterling virtue; and what is better, it was one which in after life he entirely corrected.

“2d. Another thing by which he was characterized, when I first knew him, and which had much influence on his future eminence, was his insatiable thirst for knowledge. His avidity for reading was indeed excessive. When he had got hold of a new book, or an old one, which contained matter interesting to him, scarcely anything could moderate his ardour, or recall him from his favourite pursuit. When I came to reside at Hampden Sidney, he had been there only a few months, and I was astonished to learn how extensively he had ranged over the books which belonged to the College library. And, as far as I can recollect, this thirst for knowledge was indulged at this time, without any regard to system; and often it appeared to me without any definite object. It was an appetite of the very strongest kind, and led to the indiscriminate perusal of books of almost every sort. Now, although this insatiable thirst for knowledge, and unconquerable avidity for books, would in many minds have produced very small, if any good effect, and no doubt was in some respects injurious to him; yet possessing, as he did, a mind of uncommon vigour, and a judgment remarkably sound and discriminating, that accumulation of ideas and facts, which to most men would have been a useless, unwieldy mass, was by him so digested and incorporated with his own thoughts, that it had, I doubt not, a mighty influence in elevating his mind to that commanding eminence to which it attained in his maturer years.

“3d. A third thing which at this early period was characteristic of him, and which had much influence on his capacity of being useful to his fellow-creatures in after life, was a remarkable fondness for his pen. He was, when I first knew him, in the habit of writing every day. He read and highly relished the best productions of the British Essayists; and in his composition, he would imitate the style and manner of the authors whom he chiefly admired. Addison appeared to be his favour-

ite; but his own turn of mind led him to adopt a style more sarcastic and satirical than that which is found in most of the papers of the *Spectator* or *Guardian*. These early productions of his pen were never intended for the press, and were never otherwise published than by being spoken occasionally by the students on the college stage. I may add, that his first essays in composition, though vigorous, and exuberant in matter, needed much pruning and correction.

“4th. There was yet one other trait in his mental character, which struck me as very remarkable in one of his order of intellect. He never discovered a disposition to engage in discussions of a speculative or metaphysical kind. I cannot now recollect that, on any occasion, he engaged with earnestness in controversies of this sort; and this was the more remarkable, because the persons with whom he was daily conversant, were much occupied with them. To such discussions, however, he could listen with attention; and would often show, by a short and pithy remark, that though he had no taste for these speculative and abstruse controversies, he fully understood them. Yet I am of opinion that he took less interest in metaphysical disquisitions, and read less on these points, than in any other department of Philosophy. On some accounts this was a disadvantage to him, as it rendered him less acute in minute discrimination than he otherwise might have been; but on the other hand, it is probable, that this very circumstance had some influence in preparing him to seize the great and prominent points of a subject with a larger grasp, while the minor points were disregarded as unworthy of attention.

“5th. As a teacher, he cherished a laudable ambition to know thoroughly and minutely all the branches of learning in which he professed to give instruction. His classical knowledge was accurate and highly respectable; and the ease with which he pursued mathematical reasoning gave evidence that he might have become a proficient in that department of science. At the same time, he was apt to teach, and succeeded well in training up his pupils in all their studies.”

We annex an extract, for the sake of the sound instruction which it conveys, in regard to those Methodistical devices which once became matters of serious debate among Presbyte-

rians; which some warm but injudicious men were almost ready to erect into means of grace; but which now appear in their true light to all who look back on their disastrous results.

“While ‘new measures,’ by their novelty and apparent success, were gaining attention and popularity, Dr. Speece called the attention of the Synod at Harrisonburg to the whole subject. Dr. Baxter said of them, ‘that without having any virtue in themselves, he thought they might be advantageous; that their efficiency depended on the manner of their use; and their final advantage depended on the prudence of those who used them; and, therefore, Synod was not called to pass any sentence upon them, particularly as ill effects had not yet been seen in the Synod.’ Dr. Speece, without going into an argument, expressed an opinion decisively against them all, individually and collectively, as things uncalled for, and therefore useless, if not positively harmful. ‘I wish to go along with my old friends and brethren, in all things pertaining to the ministry. I want to hear the strong reasons for these measures. I wish to be convinced if possible. I dislike being left alone by my old friends.’ A modified use was adopted by his brethren around; and to gratify his people who wished a trial to be made, and, if possible, to agree with those who believed in their advantage, he held a protracted meeting on the improved plan. The success was apparently complete. More than one hundred were added to the Church. The Doctor was silent about ‘new measures.’ After a time some ill effects began to appear; and the Doctor returned to his original position, and found his congregation ready to stand by him. Everything objectionable in the ‘new measures’ speedily disappeared from any part of the Valley in which they may have found a partial and temporary welcome. The thing that most deranged the gospel order of the churches, was the hasty admission of members—that is—allowing people to make profession of religion, and hold church membership on profession of religious exercises, in a short space of time—their first apparent attention to the subject—and that, too, by persons not instructed in the doctrines of the gospel. This in its consequences was found so great an evil, that all that led to it became suspicious, and was ultimately discarded. Dr. Speece

reiterated his opinion, 'that the ordinary means of grace in the church were, with God's blessing, sufficient for the conversion of sinners; and that in extraordinary cases, extraordinary means should be used with exemplary prudence; and that the greater the excitement on religious things, the greater the plainness and precision with which the doctrines of grace should be preached; and that time should be given for due reflection before a profession of faith involving church membership should be encouraged.'"

Within the bounds of Virginia, and wherever her sons have emigrated, this work cannot fail to be received with lively interest. Few of such readers will fail to derive from it some increase of knowledge with regard to their own ancestry, or the church connection of their families. Taking the three volumes together, namely, the one on North Carolina and the two on Virginia, we regard them as an invaluable contribution to American history. The tendency of every page is to promote the cause of evangelical truth, primitive order, and experimental piety; to hold up in impressive example all that was good in the faithful, devoted men, who planted the early southern churches; and to heal those gaping wounds which have again and again been laid open in our religious community by questions foreign to our tenets and testimony. We earnestly wish that the thoughts which the reverend author incidentally offers upon the domestic servitude existing in our land, might be weighed and acted on, before we be rent asunder by uncommanded prohibitions and unchristian censure.

If we must find something on which to animadvert, in the way of criticism, we would discharge that function as follows: Dr. Foote excels more in full and authentic details, than in symmetrical structure. The thread of story is too often dropped to be unexpectedly resumed. The coherence of the parts is not always sufficiently obvious. The work evinces more than an ordinary power of description and command of language; but, if we may speak our mind, it pleases us best in those parts where there is least departure from simple and common modes of representation. Deviations of this sort are indeed infrequent, but they are disagreeable; such, for example, is the obscure and artificial comparison between Baxter and

Brown. (Page 69.) Though the appearance of the volume is pleasing, there are numerous slips of the press. Among these we of course rank the strange double adverb "illy," instead of the English "ill." But the book is one which will remain as a treasure in many a Christian household, whose thanks and prayers will be the author's recompense.

ART. V.—*Miracles and their Counterfeits.*

THE word *miracle*, considered with reference to its derivation, means simply a wonder, or wonderful work. In this, however, as in most cases, usage has modified but not destroyed the etymological meaning. According to this use, which has become universal and classic in Christendom, the strict meaning of the word has been narrowed down, to denote a single class of wonders or prodigies. This consists of supernatural works, wrought by God himself, in contravention of the laws of nature, and in attestation of the divine commission of his inspired servants, which includes, of course, the truth of their teachings. This is now the normal and proper sense of the word *miracle*. Other wonderful events and works are, indeed, often called miracles, or miraculous. But this is always understood to be mere hyperbole of speech, employed to express the speaker's sense of the greatness of the wonder; and its expressiveness depends wholly on the strict meaning of the word *miracle* being what we have indicated. In any other view, such phrases as, "I am a miracle of grace," "the miracles achieved by modern inventive genius," etc., would be void of all that now makes them forcible and felicitous.

Such being now the fixed and proper meaning of the word, it is next to be observed, that a class of events is narrated and signalized in the Scriptures, which precisely answers to this meaning, while no other word adequately indicates them. They are variously and indiscriminately denominated by words indicating some one of the constituents of a *miracle*. These