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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.

the knot was cut by conditions and men, especially one man, that cannot be expected to occur again. If we cherish the boon from its intrinsic worth, we should value it more highly from the greatness of its price. On this point these volumes must constitute a lesson of ever-during value, while mankind remains the same.

ART. VII.—*Memoirs of John M. Mason, D. D., S. T. P., with Portions of his Correspondence.* By Jacob Van Vechten. New York: Robert Carter & Brothers. 1856. Pp. 559, 8vo.

WHEN we consider that a quarter of a century has elapsed since the death of Dr. John M. Mason, we cannot but think it strange that no memoir of his life has appeared until now. During this period, a generation of clergymen, professors, and scholars, has left the world; and of these, many who occupied less of public attention while living, have been celebrated when dead. In the estimation of his admirers, Dr. Mason was inferior to no Presbyterian preacher of his time; yet now, for the first, are we enabled to bring together the details of his biography. The work has been accomplished by his son-in-law, the Rev. Dr. Van Vechten, with the aid and counsel of other surviving members of his family. While we do not conceal our persuasion that the excellent clergyman who addressed himself to this needful task, has undertaken it amidst peculiar difficulties, arising from the death of contemporaries, and the destruction of documents, we are agreeably surprised with the large amount of valuable information which he has been able to set forth. The great commanding interest of the volume before us lies, as the author obviously would have it lie, in those parts which proceeded from the pen of Dr. Mason himself. Long and much as we had heard of this remarkable man, we were not before apprized of his talent as a letter-writer. There are passages in the extensive, and certainly unequal correspondence now first gathered, which give us a far better insight into that power which held great assemblies rapt, than anything in

all his published works, if we except two or three sermons and the Farewell Address. It is here, in the confidence of friendship, that we seem to feel the heavy and almost convulsive beatings of a heart which could not be governed by common rules, and which needed great measures of grace to restrain it from intellectual pride, casual anger, and glorying in power. Here, and in some of the anecdotes, of which we wish there had been more, we comprehend why many of the discourses produced effects, as heard, which no one experiences in perusing them; how the great orator came to treat the reading of sermons with such contempt; and what his meaning was, when on being asked, when he returned from Scotland, what was the secret of Chalmers's eloquence, he replied: HIS BLOOD-EARN-ESTNESS! In the letters, we catch, by dim reflection, what his coevals discerned brightly in the original; and they constitute, in our judgment, the charm of the book.

Not a few readers will thank this volume for introducing to them the portraiture of the pure, gentle and venerable John Mason, the elder. The fragrance of his holy life still lingers in New York, and more than once have we met with aged persons who mentioned his name with love and benediction. Equally learned with his distinguished son, he was less brilliant, adventurous, and controlling; and as here represented, we suppose him to have been less ardent and impetuous, but more humble, meek, and spiritual. The picture is well given, and we dwell on it with delight.

“John Mason, the father of Dr. Mason, was of the Scotch Secession. He early exercised the functions of professor in the Seminary of that sect, at a place called Abernethy. ‘In the year 1756, the Synod appointed Mr. Mason their Professor of Philosophy at Abernethy. In that office he continued four years; consequently he taught two classes, to the last of which I belonged. The first year he taught us Logic, a system of which he himself had compiled. He then gave us prelections on De Vries' Ontology and Pneumatology. The second year he gave us a sketch of Mathematics, with Moral and Natural Philosophy. His Compendium Logicæ, I believe, is the best extant. He always delivered his prelections in Latin, which language he spake with a fluency and propriety which I never

knew equalled. We always met twice a day. He began with examining us on his last prelection, and then delivered another, generally of an hour's length; so that he lectured two hours every day, unless when some of the students had an exegesis or something of that kind to deliver. We also met once a week for prayer and religious conversation, in which he excelled.'" His character has also been ably drawn by Dr. S. Miller, of Princeton, in his "Life of Dr. Rodgers:"—"Dr. Mason was a man of sound and strong mind, of extensive learning, and of unusually fervent piety. His scholarship was rare. At the age of 24 he taught Logic and Moral Philosophy, with reputation, in the Theological Seminary of the Anti-burghers, at Abernethy. His lectures were in Latin. As a preacher, he was uncommonly judicious and instructive; as a pastor, singularly faithful and diligent; as a friend and companion, he displayed an assemblage of excellencies rarely found in so great a degree in one person. Few ministers have ever lived in New York, in so high esteem, or died so generally and deeply lamented."

He was ordained in 1760, and emigrated in the following year to New York, where he became pastor of a Scotch Church in 1762. The edifice was in Cedar street, between Nassau street and Broadway. The same church, still flourishing after two removals, is now in Fourteenth street, under the care of the Rev. Dr. McElroy. Mr. Mason was a warm friend of the union of Scotch Seceders, which gave origin, in 1782, to the Associate Reformed Church. He characterized the dispute between the two classes of Seceders, as "the dry, the fruitless, the disgracing, the pernicious controversy about the burgessoath:" it is unworthy of being explained to our readers, being, with its cognate quarrels, an opprobrium of Protestantism and Presbytery. The Synod in Scotland adopted an act erasing his name from their roll, and ordering his Presbytery to "lay him aside." Here it is proper to observe, that when attempts were made at an earlier day to unite with the Presbyterian Synod, now our General Assembly, the failure so to unite was not chargeable on Mr. Mason.* He was a strong patriot, and American Whig. By both his marriage connections he allied

himself to the Holland blood of New York, first in the Van Wyck, and then in the Van Alstyne family. The saintly Mrs. Graham often mentions him in those private papers, which belong to what we continue to regard as one of the most delightful and most edifying of religious biographies, and it is thus that she records his death in 1792:—"My dear minister's bitter draught is over. On Thursday, the 19th of this month, the Lord received his spirit, and laid his weary flesh to rest. Like his Master, he groaned, but never complained. He had a draught of his Master's cup, but the bitter ingredient—desertion—made no part of it. I had the honour to close his dear eyes, and to shut those dear lips, from whence so many precious truths have proceeded, and to mix with the ministering spirits who attended to hail the released." Mrs. Bethune, a daughter of Mrs. Graham, touches some other particulars:—"To Dr. Mason's character I cannot do justice. But though more than a half a century has elapsed, I have still a vivid recollection of his personal appearance and manner. He was of middle stature, not corpulent; black hair, and mild but penetrating black eye; of great decision, staid deportment and gentlemanly manners; very strict in family discipline, and given to hospitality. His sermons were well studied, his delivery plain and energetic, all with a view to the glory of his Master and the salvation of souls." As a specimen both of his wisdom and piety, we here insert at length, the letter which he gave to his son, when about to resort to Edinburgh for his theological training.

"TO MR. JOHN M. MASON.

"NEW YORK, April 27, 1791.

"As you are about to leave your native land for some time, and perhaps I may never see your face again in this world, a sense of duty and tender regard for you, impel me to give you a few advices, which by the blessing of God will be useful to you in future life.

"I wish you to have the air and address of a gentleman; not of an affected, but a real gentleman, in whose character, good sense, sincerity, discretion, affability, condescension, an obliging temper, and easy behaviour, are principal traits.

"Go freely into every respectable company when you can be

introduced with propriety, and esteem such an introduction into large and mixed companies a very great favour. Be modest and attentive in company. Equally avoid loquacity and silence. Beware of impertinent staring, but keep an open countenance. Do not flatly contradict any person present, nor be engaged in angry controversy. Never speak to the disadvantage of any absent person; this would be mean, ungenerous, impolite, wicked. Be very attentive to ladies, who will give a polish to your manners. Every part of your conversation towards them should be marked with the most refined delicacy. Do not repeat any little stories or anecdotes, but such as you have reason to think none present may be supposed to be acquainted with, but take notice of such as are mentioned by others, even of such as you know, without giving any hint that you have heard of them before. Respectfully turn your face to any person you speak to, or who speaks to you. Be fond of instructive conversation, but do not altogether disregard small-talk, some proportion of which is rendered necessary by the present state of society. Never give a decisive opinion about anything in the presence of your superiors, without pressing necessity; which will seldom happen. Say little about yourself, and never vex your friends with gloomy narratives about your little ailments. Be always cheerful, but be always grave. Avoid loud laughter and smile gracefully. Be careful not to hurt the feelings of any person present. If you begin to speak about anything, and the company do not take notice of you, do not make a second attempt unless you are desired.

“While in Britain, say little about your own country. Speak respectfully of the British government, avoid controversy about the late contest between Britain and the United States, and do not directly or indirectly advise mechanics or farmers to leave the British dominions.

“Accommodate yourself to the habits of people, and their way of living, in any place you may v.sit. Do not discover any niceness of palate, but make the best of homely fair. Plain people do not study cookery, and you will hurt them much by showing any contempt of the provision they may set before you. Be not noisy when you stop at a tavern, be polite

to the landlord and servants; a real gentleman gives little trouble; he is easily pleased.

“Carefully observe the state of society, the customs and manners, the progress or decline of religion, or of the arts and sciences, in any place to which providence may lead you. Be very curious. Study mankind wherever you go.

“I need not guard you against vulgar companions, but be very kind to pious poor people, and converse familiarly with them. Have few intimate friends, and be nice in choosing them. Draw a narrow circle enclosing some about your own age, some of middle, and some of old age, and give the preference to those who are most eminent in piety, learning, and politeness. Depend most upon the advices which are the dictates of experience.

“Have stated times for visiting your friends, unless they are in affliction. Let your complimentary visits be always affectionate and short. Never suffer your presence to be painful to any person.

“Be faithful to your friends. Be a punctual correspondent; keep secrets; be affable to all men. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good, praying for and seeking opportunities to promote the happiness of all who injure you.

“Never give unnecessary trouble to any family where you may lodge. Be polite to children and servants. Observe family rules, and beware of being abroad at a late hour.

“Consider manly exercise as an important duty in which you may serve God. This will contribute much to the preservation of your health, and will defend you against hypochondriac affections, which destroy the spring of animal spirits, and make one useless and ridiculous.

“These things deserve your attention, but the following advices are of much more importance:—

“Keep your eye constantly on the state of your soul, the principles which govern your conduct, and the great realities of eternity, some of which will soon be the objects of your experience. To be a Christian, and to live as a Christian, is the sum of your happiness and of your duty.

“Never neglect the reading of the Holy Scriptures in the manner to which you have been accustomed. Be attentive to

every part of your Bible, especially to the Pentateuch, the Psalms, the Proverbs of Solomon, the Prophecies of Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and Zechariah, and the books of the New Testament. Make short annotations on what you read. Mark those texts which touch your heart, and while the impressions of them are fresh, prepare schemes of discourses upon them.

“Be very attentive to the system used in the University, and while you read it, have Turretine’s *Institutions*, and the Usher, and Brown’s *Bodies of Divinity* open before you.

“Be very exact in studying the Deistical, Socinian, and Arminian Controversies. Let it be your principal care to be able to state the doctrines of religion in a simple and perspicuous manner; this you will find to be the most effectual means of enervating objections, and opposing error. Do not embarrass yourself with a great variety of systems, nor with speculations about things which cannot be understood in this world, and perhaps will remain mysteries in the world to come. Make as great progress as possible in your systematical reading during the first year after your arrival in Scotland, and review what you shall have read in the second. Study systems in a practical manner. Remember that you are deeply interested in every doctrine of Christianity, and that even Divinity will be useless to your own soul, and the souls of others, if it is considered only as an object of speculation.

“In your first year at Edinburgh, prepare twelve short, practical sermons, twenty in the second.

“Observe the method of the ablest, the most pious and accurate preachers. Write the substance of their discourses when you are at home; but beware of a servile imitation of any preacher.

“Be very intent on the study of the Hebrew language, for three or four months, and make yourself well acquainted with its grammar. When you shall be able to understand the Hebrew Scriptures with some ease, I wish you to attend as the professor directs to the Arabic, Syriac, and Chaldaic, especially the Arabic, as much at least as will enable you to make progress in the study of them, after you shall leave the University. While you are engaged in these exercises, it will be proper to read *Leusdeni Philologus*.

“Do not, however, neglect the Latin, Greek, and French languages. Be a classical critic. Read some of Plato’s works, and make notes on what you read. In a particular manner attend to the purity of your own language. Lay in a store of classical words, that you may be able to express your sentiments on any subject, and on any occasion, with propriety and ease. In order to do this, labour to have clear ideas of things. Endeavour to acquire the habit of speaking in a plain, neat, unaffected style. Avoid bombast and vulgarity. Seldom let the proud monosyllable I, have the place in your compositions or discourses. Accustom yourself to read aloud, as one of the best means to fit you for public speaking. Be accurate in all your compositions.

“Read with great care the Fathers of the first three centuries, and the Apostolical Constitutions. In these you will find many jewels, mixed with much rubbish. Observe the exposition they give of the Scriptures, and what views they had of the doctrine of the Trinity, and of the person and office of the Redeemer. Write your remarks upon them; this will save much time in the future periods of life.

“Make much use of Prideaux’s Connection. Be very exact in reading the history of the Church, till you come to the destruction of the Exarchate of Ravenna. Read with attention, but not with implicit faith, the Ecclesiastical Histories of Eusebius, Socrates, Evagrius, Mosheim, and Spanheim, to which you may add Sigonius de Regno Italiæ, de Occidentali Imperio, and Ockley’s History of the Saracens.

“As a relief from severe study read some books of rational amusement, and make the tour of the world, in some short and well written General Geography.

“That you may not fall into confusion, and give unnecessary fatigue to your mind, make a prudent distribution of your time. If you sleep only seven hours in one day, you will have seventeen hours for devotion, for study, and for exercise. Let me again recommend to you the strictest attention to exercise. It may sometimes be necessary to lay aside study for a week or two, and to make an excursion into the country on horseback.

“Let it be your care to acquire authority over your own

mind, that with ease you may be able to apply yourself to any branch of study.

“If God shall be pleased to put you into the ministry, prepare your discourses with great accuracy. Let this be the principal business of the morning of every day. Do not put it off till the end of the week. This would be to trifle with the gospel and the souls of men; persevere in accurate preparation till the 40th or 45th year of your age. Superficial study and writing, in youth, make a poor old man. Be not however a slave to your compositions; exercise, but do not overcharge your memory. Go to the pulpit so far possessed of your notes, as to be able to speak with dignity, propriety, and ease.

“Fill your discourses with useful matter. A multitude of words without sentiments, or with sentiments not adapted to the pulpit, insult a grave worshipping assembly. Let the peculiar doctrines of the gospel be your principal subjects. Do not however neglect morality, but see that you enforce it chiefly by arguments drawn from redeeming grace. Give faith and obedience their proper places. Reason closely, but with as little appearance of reasoning as is possible for you: give a practical turn to your arguments, and never abuse those who are of a contrary opinion.

“Have short introductions. State the sense and connection of the text with great precision. Let your method be natural, arising out of the subject. Be concise in the doctrinal part, that you may not be hurried in the application. Never depart wantonly from our translation, and if at any time you shall find it necessary to alter it, do it with great modesty, and without amusing the hearers with Latin, Greek, or Hebrew words. Do not meddle with the exposition of the Scriptures, which we commonly call lecturing, for two years at least after you have appeared in a public character. Meanwhile prepare yourself for it, by a diligent reading, and close attention to the connections of Scripture. When you begin it, select such passages as have a peculiar fitness for fixing impressions upon the consciences of the hearers. Let this be your practice for one year. After that you may expound a chapter, or a book, as you shall think will be most for edification.

“Endeavour to acquire the command of your voice. Never

speak louder than is necessary, unless some divine impulse lay a necessity upon you. Screaming and bawling disgrace the pulpit. Despise theatrical airs. Let your actions be easy and natural. Hate affectation.

“Rise above the frowns and applause of men. Consider your hearers as your fellow-sinners, and your fellow-mortals, and realize the presence of the Searcher of hearts. Be serious and pointed, and you will command attention. Preach to yourself, and you will preach well to others.

“Often read the Epistles to Timothy and Titus. Travail as in birth till Christ be formed in souls.

“When settled in a congregation, begin your ministry with great modesty, affection and faithfulness. The first days of a man’s ministry have frequently been found to be his best days. Endeavour to grow, that your profiting may appear to all.

“Be very circumspect in your life. Let your conversation on all occasions proclaim the sincerity of your heart, and exemplify the salutary tendencies of the doctrine you deliver to others.

“Be very solemn in speaking to persons who desire baptism for their children, or admission to the Lord’s Supper; and never dispense those privileges to any, without the advice of your Session.

“Consider that faithfulness in catechizing young people, who are the hope of the Church, and visiting the poor and the afflicted, are some of the most important duties that will be incumbent upon you.

“Never attach yourself to any party in your congregation, nor suffer any differences among the people to come before the Session till every previous means of composing them shall fail. Whatever unfavourable opinion you may have of any of your hearers, keep it locked up in your own mind. If any of them shall treat you in an unbecoming manner, take no notice of it, but pray for them, and do your duty to them, as though they had not displeased you. Discourage tale-bearers, and never point your discourses at individuals.

“As the general interests of religion are much influenced by judicial proceedings, let it now be your care to prepare yourself for acting your part therein. Attend the meetings of the

General Assembly, the Commission of the Assembly, Synods, and Presbyteries of the National Church, and also the Judicatories of the Seceders, as you shall have opportunity. Consider Church discipline as an important subject of study. Buy the Acts of the General Assembly, and the Acts of the Synod of Dort; you have the Acts of the National Synod of France in the Library. When you shall be called to act as a member of a Church Judicatory, do not speak often, nor make long speeches, but be decisive when you speak. When differences happen among ministers, be a peace-maker. Never be a party-man. Durham on Scandal will contribute much to make you a good disciplinarian.

“Thus I have given you a few advices. I wish my time had permitted me to polish and extend them. Receive them as they are. They are an effusion of the heart of an affectionate parent. More will be occasionally sent to you, if life and health are preserved.

“I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace; may his good Spirit instruct you, and you will be happily directed. Your best interests are near the heart of your father,

JOHN MASON.

“Read these advices once a month, carefully preserve them as a memorial of me. They may be of use to you, even in old age. Don't be discouraged when so much work is cut out for you. Method, perseverance, due exercise, and, above all, Divine assistance, will enable you to do much more, with great ease.

J. M.”

Let us return to say, that Dr. John Mitchel Mason was born in New York, on the 19th day of March, 1770. At the age of seventeen he became a communicant in his father's church. He took his first degree in Columbia College, in 1789, and immediately began to study theology with his father. In 1791, he repaired to Edinburgh, to complete his training. We are inclined to regard this as one of the great formative events of his life, especially as a preacher. Even in our own day, we have often wished that while so many resort to Germany, a few of our candidates would go to Scotland, and there catch some

of the pulpit fervour and parochial diligence, which distinguish the best ministers of the Free Church, and the United Presbyterian Church. The preaching of Dr. Mason was all his life-long Scotch, in all those qualities which so widely separate the pulpit of Scotland from that of New England. Each has its excellencies; but, as to freedom, warmth, and pathos, none will stand long in awarding his preference.

His youthful religious exercises at this period are elevated and evangelical; extracts are freely given. During his residence abroad, some of these experiences will be seen to have been remarkable for tenderness, and some even for rapture. He pursued his studies with earnestness, but was interrupted by the death of his excellent father, in the spring of 1792. "The Lord, I see"—thus he writes—"will make me serve him in his own way. By ruining my favourite schemes, he has punished me for making an idol of human preparation. By taking away my father, he has punished me for leaning too much upon a created comfort." He returned to America abruptly, leaving behind him an early reputation for genius and talent. Dr. Hunter, the Professor of Divinity, assured Dr. Hosack, that young Mason, even then, wrote with facility and force, while in extemporaneous debate he clearly outstripped all rivals. He was licensed as a probationer in October, 1792; and began to preach in the pulpit which had lately been his father's. Of this church, he soon became the pastor. In 1793, Mrs. Graham writes of him:—

"Our young Timothy, J. M., is a perfect champion for the gospel of Jesus. The Lord has well girded him and largely endowed him. He walks closely with God, and speaks and preaches like a Christian of long experience. He was ordained about two months ago in his father's church, and a few weeks after married a lady of eminent piety, and preached all day, both the Sabbath before and after. There is probably no church in New York whose discipline is as strict, nor one which has so many communicants. He is reckoned a lad of great talents and an orator; and many of even the idle and careless go to hear him. Oh, for a thankful heart!" As eloquence is not an affair of tutors and training, all great preachers evince some striking powers at the start; and Mr. Mason's

popularity was speedily attained. It is matter less of surprise than regret, that so little has been preserved which could give us any distinct notion of his manner in this early stage of his ministry. We find him early publishing sermons; and among these was one upon Missions, which fixes his place among the first advocates of this great cause in America. During the first ten years, he collected six hundred new members into his church; so that at length it was found necessary for the congregation to swarm, and form a second.

In the year 1798, Mr. Mason published his "Letters on Frequent Communion," which were directed against the burdensome sacramental services, to which the Scotch very generally adhered with as much tenacity as if they had been divine institutions. Here, as throughout life, we find his strong and adventurous mind breaking away from the scrupulosities and uncommanded customs which even Protestants may erect into a Nehushtan. Against the cry of innovation, he pithily and admirably says:—"Many consider as part of the good way, whatever is older than themselves." In reference to the routine of fasts and other continued services, which had precluded frequent communion, he thus speaks:—"One hour, one minute, of genuine humiliation before God—one tear of gracious contrition for sin—one groan unutterable of the Spirit of adoption, is of more value in his sight than the most splendid round of formalities." As to the fast and thanksgiving*days, he proves that they have no warrant in Scripture; that they are contrary to the judgment of almost the whole Christian Church; and that they are attended with great and serious evils. The work shows the argumentative power and the courage which were evinced in later controversies, with an occasional declamatory tone, which savours of oral debate, and adds nothing to the permanent value of this able and unanswerable argument.

During these early years of ministry, we find Mr. Mason rendering various important services to the ecclesiastical body of which he was rapidly becoming the reputed leader. He plans a religious bookstore, and a religious newspaper. He is active in behalf of the College. He boldly writes against Jefferson, as an enemy of Christianity. Through all this bright

and important period, we feel the need of those vivid delineations, which might have been attainable thirty years ago.

The Scotch settlements greatly suffered for want of ministers, and naturally looked for supply to the mother country. In 1801, Mr. Mason was sent to Great Britain to procure a competent number of labourers. In this renewed visit, his keener observation and matured wisdom give origin to many valuable notices of Scotland and its church customs: for these we must refer to the Memoir itself. In London, he preached the celebrated sermon entitled "Messiah's Throne;" one of the few extant which give any glimpse of his astonishing powers. Seldom has any preacher more startled and fascinated the British metropolis. Of this, many testimonials remain. His letters are full of fine remark and domestic affections. "English Christianity (so he writes) is somewhat *unique*. I wish I had time to sit down and analyze it. I see in it much to admire and to love; but can observe *traits* which justify an apprehension that some of its tendencies, and those of strong operation, are not altogether auspicious. It has been my happiness to become acquainted with several of the best men, both in the Established Church, and out of it. A few days ago, I took my breakfast with good MR. NEWTON. He has one foot not more certainly in the grave, than he has the other on the threshold of heaven. This evening I go with Mr. Bethune to visit your favourite Mr. Serle.* I have received great kindness from Mr. Wilberforce, Mr. H. Thornton, and others, on whose friendship I am entitled to reckon for support in pursuing one of the ends of my visit to Great Britain. How welcome, how sweet, will be the peace of my dear family, and the sober, attentive order of my congregation! Long ago was I a Presbyterian from *principle*; and everything that I have seen since my arrival in Britain has served to strengthen my convictions. Never have I been so awfully impressed with the absolute necessity of the old-fashioned way of training up ministers in the Churches of Scotland and Holland, and of the importance of erecting, without delay, and supporting with vigour, seminaries of Theological instruction in America, as I am at this moment. It *must* be done or we are ruined.

* Author of *Horæ Solitariae*, and other works of great unction.

“This goes with our dear friends, Mr. and Mrs. Bethune. It is a mutual grief that we cannot sail together. My heart is with them, and so would be my person, if it were at all practicable. But it were foolish to hurry away at the expense of leaving business unfinished. My design and expectation are to follow in about five weeks. The dear children are constantly near my heart. O, that the gracious Providence which has hitherto watched over them, may keep them still! I commit them, with their much loved mother, to the guardian care of God my Saviour. May the light of his countenance continue to cheer you! Wherever we are, he is; and he will not leave us. He will restore me to the embraces of my precious family and affectionate friends. The month of September, I trust, will be a happy time.”

Several chapters of the work are here occupied with letters of the period 1798–1804, which we will not dismember by way of unsatisfactory extract; they are more numerous than the public could expect, at this time of day. Through all these we find Mr. Mason’s mind steadily bent on the grand object of his life, the establishment of a Theological Seminary. Copies of a plan for such a school were widely circulated in 1804, among ministers both at home and abroad. In the same year he received his doctorate. But the most striking event is the death of Hamilton, Dr. Mason’s connection with which, as a faithful counsellor and witness for God, is too well known to need rehearsal; nor dare we garble a narrative which every reader must desire to have in its integrity.

The history of the Theological Seminary founded by Dr. Mason is interesting, not merely as belonging to his life, or as connected with the Associate Reformed Church, but as disclosing the first attempt to establish a separate school for ministerial training. It was in 1806 or 1807, that Dr. Jedediah Morse wrote to Dr. Mason:—“We seriously contemplate the establishment of a Theological Seminary at Andover, on the plan of yours.” All the details of the eminent Professor’s mode of instruction are valuable to those who seek the true way of preparing young men for the ministry. Dr. Mason and his biographer lay more stress than we are disposed to do upon the abuse of text-books, and the importance of fostering of

what is sometimes called independent thinking. In mathematics, astronomy, medicine, morals, and theology, we hold, as the world of scholars has held, that a good text-book is invaluable. He who excludes printed manuals, substitutes for them the oral teaching of the Professor, which is quite as subversive of original thought. Original investigation, instead of being the first, is nearer to the last attainment of the scholar. The early task of the learner, in all sciences, is not individual discovery, at first hand, but humble reception of what a series of great minds have discovered. The Newtons and La Places began with text-books. Unguarded invitation to the bold and independent method, though useful to a few, who would even do wisely without it, may be disastrous to the many, who will abuse it. The humdrum, plodding, stolid retailer, or stupid copyist—such are in every class—is not greatly helped by your exhorting him to think for himself, for he can scarcely be said to think at all. On the other hand, such men as James McChord, and John M. Duncan, need no such stimulation. The biographer's remarks on this subject are brief and moderate, and our opinion is meant to reach objections from quarters nearer home. Humility, respect for catholic opinion, subjection of mind to the findings of reformed theology, modest acquiescence in what has been ascertained, and exact acquaintance with the terms and distinctions of the best theologians, are, in our opinion, the best preparation for subsequent discovery; and equally preventive of arrogant ignorance and heretical adventure.*

That Dr. Mason was the commanding pulpit-orator of America in his day, cannot be doubted. In the first decennium of this century he was in his glory. Not only in the Middle States, but in New England, his free and dauntless manner gave entrance for a thoroughness of old-school Westminster orthodoxy, which might otherwise have been unwelcome. He electrified many assemblies by his sermon on "Messiah's Throne." The Rev. Moses Stuart, in 1808, writes from New Haven concerning it:—"Never did a sermon make such an impression here. Even our Connecticut Bishop's son declares he never heard such a sermon before." In Boston, where he thundered

* See this delicate point discussed at length in our volume for 1832; pages 171-190

against the Socinians, he was not less admired. But the united burden of parochial and professional cares was too great, and in 1810 he resigned his pastoral charge. His speech before the Presbytery on that occasion is one of the most striking reminiscences of his eloquence, and contains more of his fire and pathos than most of his printed sermons.

Among the paltry squabbling of zealots for a psalmody which admitted none but Old Testament light, and for a communion so close as to shut out the most even of Presbyterians, such a man could no more be detained than a fir-tree can be kept alive in a window flower-pot; and in the growth of his mind and opinions he shattered many old friendships and sturdy prejudices. We have heard of those who declared that he enjoyed no prosperity after he gave up Mr. Rous's Psalms for "human composures." The matter of communion is more interesting, as connected with one of his most celebrated productions. After resigning his pastoral charge, a portion of it was erected into a separate congregation, to which he preached for a time. It was difficult to find a place of assembly, and the trustees of the Cedar street Church offered the use of their edifice. Here they assembled after the dismissal of Dr. Romeyn's congregation. Between Mason and Romeyn, there was a brotherly attachment, which, in these new circumstances, extended itself to their respective churches. Christian love being stronger than Seceder-rubrics brought pastors and churches together at the Lord's table. Perhaps it occurred to them, that Christian communion on platforms and in households was a mockery, if it did not act itself out in that ordinance which is Christ's appointed expression of fellowship. But this new wine greatly marred the old bottles; and sore griefs and controversies were the result. On a motion in the Synod to censure the lax brethren, only three members took the sterner side.

We omit much that is interesting, and all that relates to Columbia College, to say, that in 1816, Dr. Mason being enfeebled in health, revisited Europe. For eleven years he had had acted as Professor, without receiving any pecuniary compensation. He had carried through the press his "Plea for Sacramental Communion on Catholic principles." He had united in forming the American Bible Society. It was time

that he should change the scene. "His farewell interview with his family, on embarking, presented a scene which was at once tender and edifying—showing a beautiful combination of domestic affection and Christian faith. He first kneeled and offered up a most humble and pathetic prayer. He then sang, with unusual force, the whole of Newton's excellent hymn, 'The Lord will provide.' After this, amidst irrepressible emotions, he embraced each one separately, with a word of comfort and counsel to each. Finally, uttering a few short, but expressive and fervent ejaculations to Heaven, in behalf of them all, he left the house—several of his children and friends accompanying him to the Battery, whence he was conveyed in a boat to the ship lying at a distance in the bay."

His return was in November, 1817. His health was still so much impaired that during the winter he was able to lecture only on Systematic Theology. Already he had begun to complain of a portentous numbness in the right arm; and in the spring he writes to Dr. Chalmers: "My health, though improved, is not confirmed. My public labours, although greatly abridged, are still equivalent to preaching four times a week. I find the pressure too heavy. It retards my recovery, and keeps me feeble." In the reply, how do we seem to be moving among great men, when such a one as Chalmers writes to such a one as Mason, of a third, who was inferior to neither: "I think the most interesting publication that has come out of late, is a sermon by *Hall, your friend*, on the death of our Princess Charlotte." Even more delightful is it, to find this great, childlike divine writing thus to his American friend: "May I crave an interest in your prayers. I trust I feel more of the exclusive importance of Christ Jesus, and my own absolute nothingness and worthlessness in the sight of God. I am quite sure that no acceptable grace can be formed in me, but through a channel by which a stream of influence might be made to pass from Christ's fulness into my empty, and guilty, and depraved soul. O! that this humility were habitual, and that I got an habitual experience of that grace which God giveth to the humble!" And not long after, Mason writes to Chalmers concerning the death of the venerable Balfour: "O! shall we be ready to take the same flight from this earthly to that heavenly sphere? I cannot

tell you how such a question weighs down my sinful heart. Were not our Lord's righteousness perfect, his grace exceedingly abundant, and his Spirit the Living One, I should lie down in despair, and die the death of the undone. Pray for me, that I may be filled with the fulness of the Saviour, and be enabled to honour his name, tasting as well as showing forth his salvation." These are pleasing glimpses into the inner life of men, who, to the world, seemed oftener great than humble.

All this was preparation for the critical event of 1820, when Dr. Mason, during his accustomed exposition, was stricken with paralysis in the pulpit. After coming to the conclusion that his preaching days were over, but before he actually resigned his charge, he received an invitation to become President of Dickinson College at Carlisle, in Pennsylvania. In December, 1821, he removed to that post. He had scarcely been fairly inducted into the academical routine, when he sustained a fracture of the thigh-bone. In 1822, during a visit to New York, he was met by the heavy tidings of the death of his daughter, Mrs. Van Vechten, still remembered as one of the loveliest women of her day. It was concerning this beautiful creature, when still a surpassing bride, that the father had written to the modest and amiable author of the biography before us:—"You must live by faith, or you will live badly. I found its blessedness in early life; and so will you. Keep close to the Lord Jesus, as the Lord your strength; and you shall sing, 'the Lord will provide.' Remember your Master. Remember the *souls* committed to your charge. A word more—LOVE MY CATHARINE." It was concerning the same Catharine, when laid out for burial, that his palsied hand wrote as follows; and if there is a reader for whom these touches of nature and grace have no significance, he is not the reader of our choice:

"NEW YORK, August 9, 1822.

"MY DEAR SIR: Need I tell you that I sympathize with you? The heart of a father over his daughter responds to every moan of a husband's heart for his beloved wife. Yes, my dear sir, she is removed from both of us! But though nature grieves, grace will triumph. The eye of faith never shines with more lustre than when it is seen through nature's

sorrows. But what shall we say? It is the Lord; and shall he not do what he will with his own? Oh, she was his own past all peradventure! manifestly his own! The proof, as you know better than any other human being, was written, 'not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not on tables of stone, but on the fleshly tables of the heart.' If a repining or discontented thought stir in my heart, I am instantly rebuked by that prayer of our great High Priest, 'Father, I will that those whom thou hast given me, be *with me where I am*, to behold my glory.' The Lord Jesus was praying, that our dear Catharine should be with him. He was heard! Would you wish that your Lord should be refused *any* request? He knew that it would fill our hearts with anguish and our eyes with tears; yet he prayed for it. Now then we have strong claim upon his love. If any earthly event would try the quality of your religion, this will do it. O Jacob, my son, we have so much cause for thankfulness and praise, that nature's voice is almost stifled. I adore my gracious God that I had *such* a daughter to yield to his call. Do you not adore him that you had *such* a wife to give up? Our sweet Catharine is with the Resurrection and the Life. Are you sorry for that? Her conflict is over; her race is run; no more trouble now from sin or pain. Are you sorry for that? Dear Lord Jesus, our hearts bow; they kiss the rod because it is *thine*. In their desolation, they seek that repose and comfort which thou only canst bestow! May he, the Lord Jesus Christ himself, comfort and support you by his Spirit of consolation; and enable you to say, 'He hath done all things well. He hath fulfilled his word unto his servant to give that which is good.' For it stands upon eternal record, and rejoice in it, O! son of grief, that 'all things shall work together for good to them that love God.'

"Your mother is much bowed down, but she bows like a Christian. Oh, how she loved your Catharine! She is the bearer of this letter. Her heart yearns over your motherless babes. Soothe her spirit by permitting one of them to accompany her home. I wished to have seen you myself, but my broken thigh-bone could hardly stand the jolting of the stage. The paralytic affection still lurks about my frame; and I

dreaded the effect of violent agitation of mind. I submit to necessity and stay behind. Now the God of peace comfort, settle, strengthen, stablish you! make your ministry more humble, tender, and successful!—enable you to walk more closely after your Lord!—call your name ‘Barnabas, a son of consolation,’ from your abundantly comforting others with the consolation wherewith your own soul has been comforted of God.

“Yours in the bonds of nature, grace, and affection,
J. M. MASON.”

Infirmities and afflictions so thickened upon him from this time forward, that in the summer of 1824, he resigned his presidentship and returned to his native city; where after a period of retirement and decline, he peacefully breathed his last, on the morning of the Lord’s day, December 26, 1829, in the sixtieth year of his age, being three years older than his father was at the time of his death. He had lived much in three-score years, and had consumed his flaming torch with rapid combustion.

In closing this volume we can say with truth that it has been long since we read a biography with greater stir of emotions, and this more from the sayings and letters of its great subject, than from any peculiarities in the mode of treating the material. Almost every page brings before us the names of men connected with that Presbyterianism, which has since become the commanding type of American Protestant religion. Few clergymen or authors of this Church stand out, with higher relief and more vivid colours than Dr. Mason. As his was a spirit of unusual loftiness, impetuosity, and decision, it was to be expected that he should have prominent faults and violent enemies. Both parts of the statement are true, though both are thrown into perspective by the filial delicacy of the biographer. The history of all the clergy who were Dr. Mason’s contemporaries in New York, with the characteristics, the personal and social habits and the end of each—involving, as this would do, the ministerial manners and customs of the time, and the genial flow of an intercourse very unlike the starchness of New England, and too animating to be either lasting or safe—

would be a history fitted to open the fount of tears. The names of these men are fresh in our daily discourse. Among them, and over them all, as lord paramount, towered John M. Mason, a man to be feared and loved. And through all the storms and temptations of a most trying period, we do verily believe, he bore in his heart of hearts that adoring attachment to the Lord Christ which was his ruling passion. The view presented by his letters, diary, and the observations made in unobserved hours—of his faithful warnings, his parental prayers and entreaties—his words of submission and joy under affliction, and his overflowing tears both of sympathy and happiness, has done us good, and made us correct the impression derived partly from public report, and partly from the blunders of indiscriminating admirers. From none has the memory of this unapproachable man suffered more than from such of his followers as have attempted to honour him, by the rehearsal of levities and extravagancies which lost nothing by transmission, and were the blemishes of a majestic form. Especially has every imitation of his manner proved a ludicrous burlesque, especially in those who had nothing of his stature, voice, eye, presence, intellect, learning, and heart. Such is perhaps the lot of every great preacher who is boldly original.

In the preface the author informs us that it has not been thought necessary to review any of Dr. Mason's published works; and to this principle the adherence has been scrupulously close. We own our surprise at the shrinking tenderness with which the Mason-Hobart controversy is touched, especially as no single passage in Dr. Mason's life was of greater moment. For though the High-Church battle, after numerous changes of front, has been in our day shifted to an entirely different field, the tactics of these great combatants are still matter for study. It was by insufferable pretension, involving a denial of our orders and sacraments, that Dr. Mason was goaded into conflict. It is by similar pretension, in more vulgar shapes, that all Christians who hold ministerial parity are driven to the necessity of vindicating the Reformed Churches against the modern imitators of Laud. It was the fortune of Mason to find in Hobart a scholar, a gentleman, and a prelate of unblemished lawn. The abstract questions at issue,

were complicated by no ethical or financial investigations. But the denial of covenanted mercy to those who were not in fellowship with the human invention of three orders, demanded rebuke, and received it.

Again we express our high respect for the author of this long desired and welcome biography. It contains, as we have intimated, the principal facts of the history, with a rich magazine of correspondence. It is unnecessary for us to say more, in order to attract to it the attention of every reader.

ART. VIII. — *The Elements of Psychology: Including a Critical Examination of Locke's Essay on the Human Understanding, and Additional Pieces.* By Victor Cousin. Translated from the French, with an Introduction and Notes, by Caleb S. Henry, D. D. Fourth improved edition, revised according to the Author's last corrections. New York: Ivison & Phinney, 321 Broadway. Chicago: S. C. Griggs & Co., 111 Lake Street. Buffalo: Phinney & Co. 1856. Pp. 568.

IN 1839, there appeared in the pages of this Review, an article entitled Transcendentalism. It consisted of two parts; the one a general survey of the modern philosophy of Germany, the other, an examination of the philosophical system of Cousin. That article was reprinted in a pamphlet form in Boston, under the auspices of the late Professor Norton. It was subsequently included in a volume containing selections from the Princeton Review, published without any suggestion, or co-operation of the conductors of this Journal; and recently, the article in question has been reprinted in a handsome volume in Edinburgh, under the superintendence of the Rev. Patrick Fairbairn, D. D., of Aberdeen. Of this article, thus abundantly honoured, Caleb S. Henry, D. D., the translator of the Lectures of Cousin on Locke, which was one of the works therein reviewed, spoke with great contempt in the preface to the third edition of his translation, published in 1841. He says, "I have never