

THE

PRINCETON REVIEW.

APRIL, 1844.

No. II.

ART. I.—*History of the Planting and Training of the Christian Church by the Apostles.* By Dr. Augustus Neander, Ordinary Professor of Theology in the University of Berlin, Consistorial Counsellor, etc. Translated from the third edition of the Original German, by J. E. Ryland. Complete in one volume. Philadelphia: James M. Campbell and Co. 1844. 8vo. pp. 331. *J. M. Alexander*

THE translator of this celebrated work has given us a brief memoir of the author, which is, in substance as follows. John Augustus William Neander, was born at Göttingen, January 16, 1789. His youth was spent chiefly at Hamburg. Having renounced Judaism, he began his academical studies at Halle, in 1806, and completed them at Göttingen, under the venerable Planck. After a short residence at Hamburg, he commenced, in 1811, at Heidelberg, as a theological teacher; and in 1812 became theological professor extraordinary. Here he published his work on the Life and Times of the Emperor Julian. The next year he was called to the University of Berlin. His work on St. Bernard soon followed. In 1818 appeared his history of the Gnostics. His next labour was the interesting and learned Biography of Chrysostom. In 1825, he published his 'Denkwürdigkeiten,' or Memorabilia of early Christianity. All these

were preparatory to his general Church-history, which is still in progress, and on which his reputation must be founded. In the University of Berlin, Dr. Neander's instructions are not confined to ecclesiastical history, but include lectures on systematic theology, and on most of the New Testament books.

To these particulars we may add, that the private life of Neander is characterized by a childlike simplicity, and that his days and nights are spent in a devotion to profound study, such as would appal an American scholar. In patristical knowledge, it seems to be admitted, that he has no superior living: and he has lived so long among the records of the Greek churches, that their language is possessed by him almost with the familiarity of a vernacular tongue. As a lecturer, Dr. Neander is free from all encumbrance of notes, and, though singular in his manner, is in a high degree attractive and awakening; as any one who reads a single chapter of his works, will be ready to believe.

It is impossible to name a writer of Germany, whose theological position it is more difficult to designate with precision. He must certainly be regarded as a friend of the gospel and an opposer of Neology. With the Deism of the cold, flat, sneering rationalists, he has no sympathy. Towards the other wing of the infidel army, that of the high-flying, transcendental, visionary, arrogant, pantheistic, philosophists, he has expressed not only repugnance but horror. He is a supernaturalist, and a resolute defender of the doctrines of grace: but this expression must not be interpreted by English or American ideas. If we place Neander near to Tholuck, it must be at a place more remote from our own ground, and in a region where mists obscure his exact locality. Accustomed to refer theology more to the heart than the head, he is led to undervalue logical statements; and to express himself even on fundamental points with a vagueness which tantalizes the reader. In this respect he is equally opposed to the blunt negations of rationalism, and to the positive daring of Hengstenberg. The forms into which his creed is thrown, are often so wide, that even a Sabellian might not scruple to adopt them. "We will adhere," says he, "to that *theologia pectoris*, which is likewise the true theology of the spirit, the *German* theology as Luther calls it." And again: "The doctrine of Christ was not given as a rigid dead letter in one determinate form of human character, but it was announced as the word of

spirit and of life with a living flexibility and variety, by men enlightened by the Divine Spirit, who received and appropriated it in a living manner, in accordance with their various constitutional qualities and the difference of their course of life and education." With these views, he is of course little concerned to reconcile apparent discrepancies in the New Testament teaching, by any reference to an analogy of faith.

In the statement of historical facts, Neander is eminently candid. It does not seem to be his object to maintain any one of the prevailing systems. It would, however, be too much to assert, that he has no favourite opinions to sustain. As the avowed friend of spiritual, against ritual Christianity, and as the sworn enemy of all despotism in the state, and all hierarchy in the church, of all intolerance in theology, and all restriction in speculation, he finds his chosen doctrines everywhere in the golden age of the fathers. His darling tenet may be said to be, that of the universal priesthood of individual believers. Every work he has written bears directly or indirectly on this point.

Thus zealous for spiritual rather than visible religion, for piety rather than logical precision, and for generals rather than particulars, it is not surprising that Neander should consider venial the aberrations of errorists and even of heretics, and that his own statements should contain many things which strike us, of a more rigid school, as perilously latitudinarian.

We have intimated that Neander is enlisted under the standards of no established system, philosophical or theological. Yet he has a system and a philosophy of his own. There is no writer known to us in whom the disposition to methodize particulars, and round off a theory, is more apparent. We shall be understood by all students of his works. Though a historian, it is remarkable that he seems never content with the bare statement of an event. His histories are not objective. A fact—as a fact—is nothing to him. No point in a narrative is valued, until it can be brought into some curve which he hastens to determine. Hence, as every reader has observed in his history, the theological systems even of heretics, are given with wonderful completeness. He places himself at the 'standing-point' of Cerinthus or Eutyches, and from this centre describes the whole circle. Each creed is *totus teres atque rotundus*. In a less degree, the same is true of his narration. *Lacunæ*

in the documentary statements are filled up with a confidence, which in any other writer would cause distrust, but which in our author proceeds most obviously from earnest conviction conjoined with a philosophic habit. But the consequence of this is, that however delightful may be the histories of Neander, we fail to rely on him as a perfectly unbiassed witness. In our opinion, many an inferior annalist, a Fleury, a Prideaux or a Lardner, is more to be relied on, in regard to a question touching bare facts. We should not therefore go with much confidence to Neander, as an umpire on a question touching the genuineness of a book, the practice of the church in baptism, or the nature of office in the early church; decided as his award on the last point might be in our favour.

Among the peculiarities of Neander's mode of presenting truth, there is one which is strongly marked in all his teachings, whether exegetical or narrative. It is that he gives us materials for a conclusion, rather than the conclusion itself. The amiable candour which leads him to withhold the force of his own authority, at the same time increases the difficulty of the reader in apprehending what he means. Whether it be in the exposition of a text, or the ascertaining of a historical fact, it is his method, almost without exception, first to present in their utmost strength the reasons of his opponents, and then to add his own; summing up in so slight and modest a way, that, but for the order, one would often be at a loss to know which was the author's judgment. After carefully perusing such a series of arguments pro and contra, we frequently have to study the case with severe application: no writer takes us back oftener over his own track. It is a trait of some great reasoners, such as Butler, Owen and Whately; while the exact reverse is characteristic of certain other great reasoners, such as Turretine, Chillingworth and Hill. It adds to the difficulty of discerning an author's position.

Similar difficulties arise from another grand peculiarity of Neander's mind, which has given occasion to some raillery in his native land. His motto is *free development*. It seems to be a part of his nature, to have no capacity for seeing anything in insulation. All the objects of his mind are *in fluxu*. He regards every fact as a transition-point from one state of things to another. Thus even errors and abuses are processes through which the cyclical motion must revolve. This turn of mind is obviously the effect

of that proclivity to philosophic system which we have noted, and the cause of that leniency with which he often appears to look on what is evil.

The work which we are reviewing first appeared in 1812. Since that time it has gone through two editions, the third bearing date August 2, 1842. It does not propose to give a complete history of the apostolic age, but more properly of the manner in which Christianity was developed out of Judaism. It might be denominated a copious commentary upon the Acts of the Apostles, with such a view of the Epistles as illustrates the subject named in the title. In five books, the author treats in order of the Christian Church before it spread beyond Palestine—of the spread of Christianity among the Gentiles—of the labours of James and John during the same period—of the Apostle John, as closing the apostolic age—and of the apostolic doctrine.

Viewed as a whole, we need scarcely say, it is a learned, candid, and truly fascinating book. It throws new light on an old subject. It takes us over a familiar but inexhaustible field, with a new guide, of incomparable abilities. There are a freshness and originality on every page such as one could scarcely dare expect on such a topic. The text is peculiarly flowing, in consequence of the peculiar method of the author, which transfers all citation and all polemical remark to the margin. But, for the same reason, the notes contain so much independent discussion, that, to prevent interruption, they should be reserved for separate perusal. This remark applies to all Neander's publications.

The first event of great importance which occurs in the history, is the effusion of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. And here, we acknowledge, the German tendency to tamper with inspired statements is apparent. There is an obvious anxiety to explain the wonderful phenomena on psychological principles; a disposition which in rationalists has eviscerated the body of divine truth, and which is as dangerous as it is unphilosophical. To shut out miracle, in whole or in part, is either to prescribe ways in which God shall operate, or to abridge omnipotence. Grant the latter, and even a child does not revolt at the supernatural. Never have we been able to perceive any gain in this paring away at the edge of a miracle. We learn nothing concerning the pentecostal glory, when it is surmised "that all which presented itself to them as a perception of the outward senses, might be, in fact, only a perception of the

predominant inward mental state, a sensuous objectiveness of what was operating inwardly with divine power, similar to the ecstatic visions which are elsewhere mentioned in Holy Writ." And we are amazed at finding Neander concluding, that "in the construction of the whole narrative we find nothing that obliges us to adopt the notion of a supernatural gift of tongues in the usual sense. The flames that settled on their heads appear as the natural symbols of the new tongues, or new language of that holy fire which was kindled in the hearts of the disciples, by the power of the Holy Spirit."

So also in regard to the vision of Peter, at Joppa, the obscurity is only transferred from the fact to the description, when Neander tells us, that "two tendencies of his nature came into collision. The higher, the power of the Divine, had the mastery over his spirit, and the power of sensuous wants over his lower nature. Thus it came to pass, that the Divine and the Natural were mingled together, not so as to obscure the Divine, but the Divine availed itself of the natural as an image, a symbolic vehicle for the truth about to be conveyed to Peter."

In regard to the conversion of the Apostle Paul, Neander takes higher ground; but even here there is what we consider an unreasonable solicitude to explain the miracle. The modus of a miracle cannot be explained. He conceives the whole, independently of all outward phenomena, as an inward transaction in Paul's mind, a spiritual revelation of Christ to his higher self-consciousness. Against the grosser instances of such interpretation, we would urge the very arguments which our author brings to bear upon Strauss; nay, the very arguments which all modern interpreters, Swedenborg excepted, have found valid against Origen and the allegorists. And as to the conversion of Saul, we find no difficulty in the belief of our childhood, that he heard the Lord Jesus in person.

From the acknowledged candour and learning of Dr. Neander, we presume there is no point on which his opinions will be sought with more avidity, than on the early constitution of the church. These opinions will be found, so far as they are received, to be absolutely fatal to prelacy. Of government, as of everything else, he holds the particulars to have been evolved gradually and under the stress of circumstances. But the importance of the topic will justify an extract of some length :

“As the believers, in opposition to the mass of the Jewish nation who remained hardened in their unbelief, now formed a community internally bound together by the one faith in Jesus as the Messiah, and by the consciousness of the higher life received from him, it was necessary that this internal union should assume a certain external form. And a model for such a smaller community within the great national theocracy already existed among the Jews, along with the Temple worship, namely, *the Synagogues*. The means of religious edification which they supplied, took account of the religious welfare of all, and consisted of united prayers and the addresses of individuals who applied themselves to the study of the Old Testament. These means of edification closely corresponded to the nature of the new Christian worship. This form of social worship, as it was copied in all the religious communities founded on Judaism, (such as the Essenes) was also adopted to a certain extent at the first formation of the Christian church. But it may be disputed, whether the Apostles, to whom Christ committed the chief direction of affairs, designed from the first that believers should form a society exactly on the model of the Synagogue, and, in pursuance of this plan, instituted particular offices for the government of the church corresponding to that model—or whether, without such a preconceived plan, distinct offices were appointed, as circumstances required, in doing which they would avail themselves of the model of the Synagogue with which they were familiar.

“The advocates of the first scheme (particularly Mosheim) proceed on the undeniably correct assumption, that the existence of certain presidents at the head of the Christian societies, under the name of Elders (*πρεσβύτεροι*) must be presupposed, though their appointment is not expressly mentioned, as appears from Acts xi. 30. The question arises, Whether even earlier traces cannot be found of the existence of such Presbyters? The appointment of deacons is indeed first mentioned as designed to meet a special emergency, but it seems probable that their office was already in existence. It may be presumed, that the apostles, in order not to be called off from the more weighty duties of their office, appointed from the beginning such almoners; but as these officers hitherto had been chosen only from the native Jewish Christians of Palestine, the Christians of Jewish descent, who came from other parts of the Roman empire, and to whom the Greek was almost as much their mother-tongue as the Aramaic, the Hellenists as they were termed—believed that they were unjustly treated. On their remonstrance, deacons of Hellenistic descent were especially appointed for them, as appears by their Greek names. As the apostles declared that they were averse from being distracted in their purely spiritual employment of prayer and preaching the word by the distribution of money, we may reasonably infer that even before this time, they had not engaged in such business, but had transferred it to other persons appointed for the purpose.”

“Hence we are disposed to believe, that the church was at first composed entirely of members standing on an equality with one another, and that the apostles alone held a higher rank, and exercised a directing influence over the whole, which arose from the original position in which Christ had placed them in relation to

other believers : so that the whole arrangement and administration of the affairs of the church proceeded from them, and they were first induced by particular circumstances to appoint other church officers, as in the instance of deacons."

"The institutions of the office of presbyters was similar in its origin to that of deacons. As the church was continually increasing in size, the details of its management also multiplied ; the guidance of all its affairs by the apostles could no longer be conveniently combined with the exercise of their peculiar apostolic functions ; they also wished in accordance with the spirit of Christianity, not to govern alone, but preferred that the body of believers should govern themselves under their guidance ; thus they divided the government of the church, which hitherto they had exercised alone, with tried men, who formed a presiding council of elders, similar to that which was known in the Jewish Synagogues under the title of *πρεσβύτεροις*. Possibly, as the formal appointment of deacons arose from a specific outward occasion, a similar, though to us unknown, event occasioned that of presbyters. They were originally chosen as in the Synagogue, not to much for the instruction and edification of the church, as for taking the lead in its general government.

"But as to the provision made in the primitive church for religious instruction and edification, we have no precise information. If we are justified in assuming that the mode adopted in the assemblies of Gentile Christians, which in accordance with the enlightened spirit and nature of Christianity, was not confined to one station of life, or to one form of mental cultivation—was also the original one, we might from *that* conclude, that from the first, any one who had the ability and an inward call to utter his thoughts on Christian topics in a public assembly, was permitted to speak for the general improvement and edification.

"But the first church differed from the churches subsequently formed among the Gentiles in one important respect, that in the latter there were no teachers of that degree of illumination, and claiming that respect to which the apostles had a right, from the position in which Christ himself had placed them. Meanwhile, though the apostles principally attended to the advancement of Christian knowledge, and as teachers possessed a preponderating and distinguished influence, it by no means follows, that they monopolized the right of instructing the church. In proportion as they were influenced by the spirit of the Gospel, it must have been their aim to lead believers by their teaching to that spiritual maturity, which would enable them to contribute (by virtue of the divine life communicated to all by the Holy Spirit) to their mutual awakening, instruction and improvement. Viewing the occurrences of the day of Pentecost as an illustration of the agency of the Divine Spirit in the new dispensation, we might conclude that, on subsequent occasions, that spiritual excitement which impelled believers to testify of the divine life, could not be confined to the apostles. Accordingly, we find that individuals came forward, who had already devoted themselves to the study and interpretation of the Old Testament, and to meditation on divine things, and when, by the illumination of the Holy Spirit, they had become familiar with the nature of the gospel, they could with comparative ease develop and apply its truths

in public addresses. They received the gift for which there was an adaptation in their minds—the *χάρισμα διδασκαλίας*, and, in consequence of it, were inferior only to the apostles in aptitude for giving public instruction. Besides that connected intellectual development of truth, there were also addresses, which proceeded not so much from an aptness of the understanding improved by its exercise, and acting with a certain uniformity of operation—as from an instantaneous, immediate, inward awakening by the power of the Holy Spirit, in which a divine afflatus was felt both by the speaker and hearers; to this class, belonged the *προφητεῖαι*, the *χάρισμα προφητείας*. To the prophets also were ascribed the exhortations (*παρακλήσεις*), which struck with the force of instantaneous impression on the minds of the hearers. The *διδάσκαλοι* might also possess the gift of *προφητεία*, but not all who uttered particular instantaneous exhortations as prophets in the church were capable of holding the office of *διδάσκαλοι*. We have no precise information concerning the relation of the *διδάσκαλοι* to the presbyters in the primitive church, whether in the appointment of presbyters, care was taken that only those who were furnished with the gift of teaching should be admitted into the college of presbyters. Yet, in all cases, the oversight of the propagation of the Christian faith—of the administration of teaching and of devotional exercises in the social meetings of believers, belonged to that general superintendence of the church which was entrusted to them, as in the Jewish synagogues; although it was not the special and exclusive offices of the elders to give public exhortations, yet whoever might speak in their assemblies, they exercised an inspection over them. Acts xiii. 14. In an epistle written towards the end of the apostolic era to an early church composed of Christians of Jewish descent in Palestine (the Epistle to the Hebrews), it is presupposed that the rulers of the church had from the first provided for the delivery of divine truth, and watched over the spiritual welfare of the church, and therefore had the care of souls.”

Concerning the general tenour of the history which follows, tracing the diffusion of Christian opinion, we find little to remark. At various points, our attention is arrested by adventurous opinions, but the observations are for the most part highly interesting, and fitted to throw great light on the New Testament annals. Seldom have we read a work which abounds more in new and original views of this attractive period. We may adduce, as a happy instance of what we mean, his account of the introduction of Christianity at Athens. No man living is, we suppose, more fitted by intimate acquaintance with the Grecian mind, to place himself in the very position of Paul on Mars Hill:

“Though the consequences which resulted from the apostle’s labours at Athens were at first inconsiderable; yet his appearance in this city (which in a different sense from Rome might be called

the metropolis of the world,) was in real importance unquestionably one of the most memorable signs of the new spiritual creation. A herald of that divine doctrine which, fraught with divine power, was destined to change the principles and practices of the ancient world, Paul came to Athens, the parent of Grecian culture and philosophy; the city to which, as the Grecian element had imbued the culture of the West, the whole Roman world was indebted for its mental advancement, which also was the central point of the Grecian religion, where an enthusiastic attachment to all that belonged to ancient Hellas, not excepting its idolatry, retained a firm hold till the fourth century. Zeal for the honour of the gods, each one of whom had here his temple and his altars, and was celebrated by the masterpieces of art, rendered Athens famous throughout the civilized world. It was at first Paul's intention to wait for the arrival of Silas and Timothy before he entered on the publication of the gospel, as by his companions who had returned to Berea, he had sent word for them to follow him as soon as possible. But when he saw himself surrounded by the statues, and altars, and temples of the Gods, and works of art, by which the honour due to the living God alone was transferred to creatures of the imagination—he could not withstand the impulse of holy zeal, to testify of Him who called erring men to repentance and offered them salvation. He spoke in the synagogue to the Jews and Proselytes, but did not wait as in other cities till a way was opened by their means for publishing the gospel to the heathen. From ancient times it was customary at Athens for people to meet together under covered porticoes in public places, to converse with one another on matters of all kinds, trifling or important; and then, as in the time of Demosthenes, groups of persons might be met with in the market, collected together merely to hear of something new. Accordingly, Paul made it his business to enter into conversation with the passers-by, in hopes of turning their attention to the most important concern of man. The sentiment with which he was inspired had nothing in common with the enthusiasm of the fanatic, who is unable to transport himself from his own peculiar state of feeling to the standing-point of others, in order to make himself acquainted with the obstacles that oppose their reception of what he holds as truth with absolute certainty. Paul knew, indeed, as he himself says, that the preaching of the crucified Saviour must appear to the wise men of the world as foolishness, until they became fools, that is, until they were convinced of the insufficiency of their wisdom in reference to the knowledge of divine things, and for the satisfaction of their religious wants; 1st Cor. i. 23; iii. 18. But he was not ashamed, as he also affirms, to testify to the wise and to the unwise, to the Greeks and to the barbarians, of what he knew from his own experience to be the power of God to save those that believe; Rom. i. 16. The market to which he resorted was near a portico of the philosophers. Here he met with philosophers of the Epicurean and Stoic schools. If we reflect upon the relative position of the Stoics to the Epicureans, that the *former* acknowledged something divine as the animating principle in the universe and in human nature, that they were inspired with an ideal model founded in the moral nature of man, and that [they recognised man's religious wants and the traditions that bore testimony to it;—while on the other hand, the

latter, though they did not absolutely do away with the belief in the gods, reduced it to something inert, non-essential, and superfluous; that they represented pleasure as the highest aim of human pursuit, and that they were accustomed to ridicule the existing religions as the offspring of human weakness and the spectral creations of fear;—we might from such a contrast infer that the Stoics made a much nearer approach to Christianity than the Epicureans. But it does not follow that the former would give a more favourable reception to the gospel than the latter, for their vain notion of moral self-sufficiency was diametrically opposed to a doctrine which inculcated repentance, forgiveness of sins, grace and justification by faith. This supreme God—the impersonal eternal reason pervading the universe—was something very different from the living God, the heavenly Father full of love whom the gospel reveals, and who must have appeared to the Stoics as far too human a being; and both parties agreed in the Grecian pride of philosophy, which would look down on a doctrine appearing in a Jewish garb, and not developed in a philosophic form, as a mere outlandish superstition. Yet many among those who gathered round the apostle during his conversations, were at least pleased to hear something new; and their curiosity was excited to hear of the strange divinity whom he wished to introduce, and to be informed respecting his new doctrine. They took him to the hill, where the first tribunal at Athens, the Areopagus, was accustomed to hold its sittings, and where he could easily find a spot suited to a large audience. The discourse of Paul on this occasion is an admirable specimen of his apostolic wisdom and eloquence: we here perceive how the apostle (to use his own language) to the heathens, became a heathen that he might gain the heathens to Christianity.

“Inspired by feelings that were implanted from his youth in the mind of a pious Jew, and glowing with zeal for the honour of his God, Paul must have been horrorstruck at the spectacle of the idolatry that met him wherever he turned his eyes. He might easily have been betrayed by his feelings into intemperate language. And it evinced no ordinary self-denial and self-command, that instead of beginning with expressions of detestation, instead of representing the whole religious system of the Greeks as a Satanic delusion, he appealed to the truth which lay at its basis, while he sought to awaken in his hearers the consciousness of God which was oppressed by the power of sin, and thus aimed at leading them to the knowledge of that Saviour whom he came to announce. As among the Jews, in whom the knowledge of God formed by divine revelation led to a clear and pure development of the idea of the Messiah, he could appeal to the national history, the law and the prophets, as witnesses of Christ; so here he appealed to the undeniable anxiety of natural religion after an unknown God. He began with acknowledging in the religious zeal of the Athenians a true religious feeling, though erroneously directed, an undeniable tending of the mind towards something divine. He begins with acknowledging in a laudatory manner the strength of the religious sentiment among the Athenians, and adducing as a proof of it, that while walking amongst their sacred edifices, he lighted on an altar dedicated to an unknown God.

“The inscription certainly as understood by those who framed it, by no means proved that they were animated with the conception of an unknown God exalted above all other Gods; but only that according to their belief they had received good or evil from some unknown God, and this uncertainty in reference to the completeness of their worship, enters into the very essence of Polytheism, since, according to its nature, it includes an infinity of objects. But Paul cited this inscription, in order to attach a deeper meaning to it, and to make it a point of connexion, for the purpose of pointing out a higher but indistinct sentiment, lying at the root of Polytheism. Polytheism proceeds from the feeling of dependence—(whether founded on a sense of benefits conferred or of evils inflicted)—on a higher unknown power, to which it is needful that man should place himself in the right relation; but instead of following this feeling, in order by means of that in human nature, which is supernatural and bears an affinity to God, to rise to a consciousness of a God exalted above nature, he refers it only to the powers of nature operating upon him through the senses. That by which his religious feeling is immediately attracted, and to which it refers itself, without the reflective consciousness of man making it a distinct object, is one thing; but that which the mind enthralled in the circle of nature—doing homage to the power over which it ought to rule—converts with reflective consciousness into an object of worship, is another thing. Hence Paul views the whole religion of the Athenians as the worship of a God unknown to themselves, and presents himself as a person who is ready to lead them to a clear self-consciousness respecting the object of their deeply felt religious sentiment.

“‘I announce to you Him,’ said he, ‘whom ye worship, without knowing it. He is the God who created the world and all that is therein. He, the Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made by human hands, he requires no human service on his own account—he, the all-sufficient one, has given to all, life, and breath, and all things. He also is the originator of the whole human race, and conducts its developement to one great end. He has caused all the nations of the earth to descend from one man, and has not allowed them to spread by chance over the globe; for, in this respect, every thing is under his control, he has appointed to each people its dwelling-place, and has ordained the various eras in the history of nations—their developement in space and time is fixed by his all-governing wisdom. Thus God has revealed himself in the vicissitudes of nations, in order that men may be induced to seek after him—to try whether they could know and find him: and they might easily know him, since he is not far from any one of us, for in him our whole existence has its root.’ As an evidence of the consciousness of this original relationship to God, he quotes the words of a heathen, one of themselves, the poet Aratus, who came from the native country of the apostle. ‘For we are the offspring of God.’ After this appeal to the universal higher self-consciousness, he goes on to say; since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to believe that the divinity is like any earthly material, or any image of human art. This negative assertion manifestly includes a positive one; we must strive to rise to the divinity by means of that within us which is related to him. Instead of carrying on the argument against

idolatry, the apostle leaves his hearers to decide for themselves—and presupposing the consciousness of sin—without attempting to develop it—he proceeds with the annunciation of the gospel. After God had with great long-suffering endured the times of ignorance, he now revealed the truth to all men, and required all to acknowledge it and to repent. With this was connected the annunciation of the Redeemer, of the forgiveness of sins to be obtained through him, of his resurrection as the confirmation of his doctrine, and a pledge of the resurrection of believers to a blessed life, as well as of the judgment to be passed by him on mankind. As long as the apostle confined himself to the general doctrine of Theism, he was heard with attention by those who had been used to the lessons of Grecian philosophy. But when he touched upon that doctrine which most decidedly marked the opposition of the Christian view of the world to that entertained by the heathens, when he spoke of a general resurrection, he was interrupted with ridicule on the part of some of his hearers. Others said, We would hear thee speak at another time on this matter; whether they only intended to hint in a courteous manner to the apostle that they wished him to close his address, or really expressed a serious intention of hearing him again. There were only a few individuals who joined themselves to the apostle, listened to his further instructions, and became believers. Among these was a member of the Areopagite council, Dionysius; who became the subject of so many legends. The only authentic tradition respecting him appears to be, that he was the principal instrument of forming a church at Athens, and became its overseer.”

When our author comes to discuss the ‘gift of tongues,’ we regret to find him involved in an obscurity to us impenetrable. After a sedulous perusal of what he says, we profess ourselves absolutely unable to determine, whether he thinks those who were thus endowed actually spoke in foreign languages, or not. “Such a person” says he, “prayed in the spirit; the higher life of the mind and disposition predominated, but the intelligent developement was wanting. Since he formed a peculiar language for himself from his own individual feelings and intentions, he was deficient in the ability to express himself so as to be understood by the majority.”

Upon the subject of the Christian Sabbath it is well known that a marked difference has existed, even from the time of the Reformation, between British Protestants and those of the European continent. Common as it is to charge the Calvinists of England and Scotland with a blind imitation of Geneva, it is certain that on this important point, they departed widely from the teachings of John Calvin. And we are disposed to ascribe to this fact, and to the kindred observance of family worship, the persistency of British Christians in spiritual Christianity. If lax views

of the Sabbath were defended at the time of the Reformation, a practice still more latitudinary has prevailed and increased. There is nothing in the domestic institutions of Germany, which more strikes a Scottish or American Presbyterian. It occasioned in us no surprise therefore, to find Neander advocating the extreme of the national opinion; especially as we had found even Hengstenberg writing against the British and American Sabbatarians. The opinions of our author may be thus stated: All days were in Paul's judgment, equally holy. He considers the reference of religion to certain days as foreign to Christian freedom. "A perfectly unquestionable and decided mention of ecclesiastical observance of Sunday among the Gentile Christians, we cannot find in the times of the apostle Paul, but there are two passages which make its existence probable." These are 1 Cor. xii. 1, and Acts xx. 7.

With this view of the Sabbath no one need marvel that Neander should deny the prevalence of infant baptism in the early church. In respect both to mode and subjects, his judgment is in favour of the Baptists.

From the plan of this work, a large part of it is necessarily occupied, in ascertaining the date and occasion of the apostolical epistles. This opens a field in which the peculiar genius of Neander delights to expatiate. His observations evince amazing research, profound acquaintance with antiquity, and a subtle and sagacious logic which derives proofs from the most casual and trifling facts and expressions. His labours in this kind may be compared with those of Paley's great work, the *Horae Paulinae*. If, unlike the latter, our author more frequently unsettles our confidence, we must attribute this to the characteristic difference of the men—one always seeking a resting-place of truth; the other a wide expanse in which to soar with freedom,—one the most British of Britons; the other a German of the Germans. Great light is thrown upon these parts of scripture by such researches and reasonings; yet we are frequently brought to a pause. All are not gifted with equal optics, and we are not ashamed to own that amidst the darkness which envelopes these remote productions, our author often manifests a clairvoyance in which we cannot follow him. Every reader has observed this tendency in Macknight; but in Neander it is still more predominant. He sees Judaism, where others see none; and Gnosticism, even in its specific divisions, where everything seems plain

without it. It is conceivable, we think, that the study of patristic records for many years may have a tendency to suffuse over the scriptural text references to heresies of later origin. A simpler hypothesis would often be nearer the truth. There is a school of German critics into whose heads it seems never to have entered, that a narrative, such as that of Matthew, could have been written, without an intention to combat any one heretical opinion. This remark is not intended however to detract from the great value which belongs to this department of Dr. Neander's book. His observations are mostly new and ingenious, sometimes felicitous and incontrovertible, and always modest and candid.

We own ourselves less gratified—nay, unfeignedly alarmed—when our learned author comes to sit in judgment upon the genuineness of particular books of scripture. What odium has been poured upon poor Luther, for having in a moment of oscitancy called the epistle of James an *epistola straminea*: but how would that good man stand aghast, could he return and see how his followers are dealing with the sacred canon! It is the field in which modern criticism chiefly vaunts itself. Scarcely a book of the New Testament has escaped the *obeliscus* of some Aristarchus; and we know not whether the doctor's hat could be duly conferred in Germany, on one who had not singled out some book for elimination.

It is amazing to observe with what self-possession modern writers sit in judgment on the writers of a remote age. This is genuine—that is spurious. Setting aside all traditional and diplomatic reasons, they found themselves entirely upon internal grounds. Having, on some hypothesis of their own, decided on the 'standing-point'—so they love to call it—of an author, they instantly reject whatever cannot be referred to this. Of writings in a foreign ancient tongue and a peculiar dialect, and only a few pages in length, they gravely determine the parentage, upon bare inspection. Of this presumption, we regret to say, Neander cannot be acquitted.

From the tone and style of a scriptural writing, modern German critics undertake to determine the genuineness. The experiment is hazardous in our language and our own day. Cowper informs us, that in the early edition of the Olney Hymns, there is one which, though marked as his, was written by Newton. Is there a man in England or

America, who, on purely internal grounds, would venture to point out that hymn? Has any critic discriminated between the respective portions of Pope, Swift and Arbuthnot, in their joint production? "Julius Scaliger," says the learned and elegant Mathias, "wrote and published an oration, without his name, against the famous tract by Erasmus, called Ciceronianus. Erasmus, having perused it, immediately, (and upon conviction as he thought) fixed upon Hieronymus Aleander, who was afterwards made an Archbishop by Leo X. and a Cardinal by Pope Paul the Third, as the author of the whole, or of the greatest part of it, by signs which he conceived to be certain and infallible. These signs were strong indeed. His phrasology, his manner of speaking, his peculiar diction, his habit of life, and even the very intercourse which Erasmus had with him. Nay, his genius and disposition were so evident, that Aleander could not be more intimately known to himself than he was to Erasmus. *Yet Erasmus was mistaken entirely.*" Our biblical critics forget altogether, that a man's style may vary with his temper, his object, his circumstances, and his time of life. Independently of external grounds, who would ascribe to Calvin both the Commentary on Seneca, and the Institutions; to Milton, the Masque of Comus and the *Defensio Secunda*; or to Fénelon, the 'Lettres Spirituelles' and *Telemaque*? Yet there are in Germany scores of scholars, whose tact enables them to pick out a Pauline epistle, as certainly as a bank-cashier can detect a counterfeit note.

No limit can be set to this freedom of judgment. De Wette cites several who attribute the Apocalypse to a disciple of John. Eichhorn pronounced it a drama on the fall of Judaism and Paganism. Semler condemned it as the work of a fanatic. Ammon thought the author and the editor of John's gospel to be different persons. Vogel, Rettig, Ballenstedt and Bretschneider, deny its authenticity. Schleiermacher rejects first Timothy, Eichhorn all the Pastoral Epistles. Schmidt throws doubt over the epistles to the Thessalonians. Cludius treats those of Peter in the same way. Baur and Schneckenburger consider Luke, in the Acts, as giving, not a faithful narrative of events, but an apologetic statement, to vindicate favourite opinions. Baur, in his *Essays on the Romans*, decides that Paul could never have written what occurs Rom. xv. 24, 28. He gives up the historical credibility of the Acts. Both

these writers agree that the discourse of Paul in the twentieth chapter was fabricated by the author. Kern maintains that the epistle of James was forged by a Jewish Christian, in the name of this apostle, to controvert the Pauline doctrinal views which prevailed in the Gentile churches. Gfrörer finds undeniable marks of falsehood in the account given of Cornelius. And it is significant, that even the sounder German writers, when called upon to combat such views, rehearse them without any approach to a shudder.

Lest we should seem to involve Neander in such charges of presumption, without reason, let us state one or two of the conclusions in the work before us. He regards the Epistle to the Hebrews as the work of a Jewish Christian, a learned and eloquent Alexandrian, who stood to Paul in the same relation as Melancthon to Luther. He denies the genuineness of the First Epistle to Timothy. "I cannot deny," says he, "that when I come from reading other Pauline Epistles, and especially the two other Pastoral Letters, I feel myself struck by the impression of something not Pauline. More particularly the mode of transition appears to me not in the Pauline style—as in ii. 7; iii. 1; iii. 15; v. 17, 18; and the relation of this epistle to the two other Pastoral Letters is also suspicious. I can indeed find reasons for allaying these doubts, but none which, taken altogether, can satisfy the unprejudiced lover of truth." Of the epistle of Jude, he says, that "even if genuine," it could not have been written by an apostle of that name, who was also a brother of James. And finally, he gives up the second epistle of Peter. "The principal marks," says he, "of the spuriousness of this epistle, are the difference of the whole style, compared with the first, and the use here made of the Epistle of Jude, which is partly copied and partly imitated." We must leave it to the serious reader to determine, how far an author holding such opinions, and maintaining them with learning and eloquence, is a safe guide for young theologians.

We dare not undertake to give the precise opinions of Neander, on the inspiration of the scriptures. That he holds an inspiration, in some sense, is apparent from almost every chapter of his works. That the degree and kind of divine influence fall far below what is regarded as orthodox among ourselves, it is easy to believe. The manner in which he interprets the book of Revelation, so remarkably

indicates the adventurous character of his speculations, that we ask attention to the following extract :

“ We remark in this book, the vivid impression which Nero's persecution of the Christians, his setting on fire part of the city of Rome, and especially his cruelties, had made on the minds of men. The story that Nero was not really dead, but had retired to the Euphrates, and would return again from thence (see my Church History, i. 137) appears here more fully delineated by a Christian imagination. He is the monster to whom Satan gave all his power, who returns as antichrist and the destroyer of Rome, who will force all to worship his image. The Roman empire at that time is set forth as the representative of heathenism, and of ungodly power personified, and in this connexion, under the image of the beast with seven heads (the seven Roman emperors which would succeed one another till the appearance of antichrist), Nero is signified as one of these heads (xiii. 3,) which appeared dead, but whose deadly wound was healed, so that to universal astonishment he appeared alive again. Nero reappearing after it had been believed that he was dead, is the beast “ which was, and is not, and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit—and yet is,” Rev. xvii. 8. Of the seven emperors who were to reign until the appearance of antichrist, it is said that five have fallen—one (Nero's successor) is now reigning, and the other is not yet come : and when he comes he must remain only a short time, and the beast which was and is not, is itself the eighth and one of the seven ; (Nero as one of the seven emperors is the fifth. but inasmuch as he comes again as antichrist, and founds the last universal monarchy following the succession of the seven emperors, he is the eighth.) Nero comes from the East, supported by his tributaries—the ten kings, (his Satraps, the ten horns of the beast) leagued with him to destroy Rome, and to make war on Christianity. The waters of the Euphrates are dried up, to make a way for Nero with his ten Satraps, xvi. 12, who, in his service, would burn and destroy Rome, xvii. 16. All this marks the time in which the Apocalypse must have been written, the change of the emperor after Nero, while the image of this monster was yet in vivid recollection, and men were disposed to depict the future in magnified images of the past ; it also agrees with this date, that the temple at Jerusalem is described as still in existence, i. 1, therefore it must be before the year 70. But in this book, I am struck with one contradiction, of which I have never met with a satisfactory solution. I shall rejoice to find that it has been explained by Dr. Lucke in his commentary, which I am anxiously looking for. In vii. 4, the whole number of believing Jews, is given as one hundred and forty-four thousand : and though this number may seem to be merely an assumed round number, yet the number of Christians then existing among the Jews, might not differ very greatly from it. See Acts xxi. 20. Besides these, an innumerable company of believers from all nations and tongues appear before the throne of God, from which the former as Jews are expressly distinguished. On the other hand, in xiv. 4, the hundred forty and four thousand appear as the company of the elect from the great body of Christians in the whole world, who present the model of a holy life, as belonging to which a life of celibacy

seems to be reckoned, a view which would not accord with John's sentiments. Origen has indeed noticed this contradiction, T. I. *Joh.* § 1, 2; but he avails himself of the allegorical interpretation; he thinks that in the first passage, the Jews in a spiritual sense, the flower of Christians out of all nations are to be understood; this opinion, which others also have adopted, cannot be correct, for it is evident from the other passage, that here only believers of Jewish descent are intended. As in the last quoted passage I can find nothing predicable of Jewish Christians, I cannot satisfy myself with the solution proposed by Credner in his *Einleitung*, p. 711."

The Sixth Book, which occupies more than a fourth part of the volume, is taken up with a view of the Apostolic Theology. Here, however, we must not look for a system of divine truth deduced from the whole scriptures, or even from the epistles taken jointly. The method of Neander is very different. Considering each of the sacred writers as an independent witness, he draws off the sum of his doctrine, from his own statements, without any aid from other sources, and without any anxiety to harmonize the divergent representations. He quotes with admiration the words of Nitzch, in regard to these different forms of doctrine: "To disown them in favor of a one-sided dogmatism, is to abandon that completeness and solidity which these modes of contemplating the Christian faith impart, while they reciprocally complete one another; it is to slight that by which scripture truth maintains its elevation above conflicting systems." The manner in which Neander arranges the results of his inquiry is highly characteristic. There is scarcely a great doctrine of Christianity, which we do not find shadowed here;—but only shadowed. We attempt to seize the definite logical assertion, and it eludes our grasp. The mind of the author seems incapable of viewing any one truth with a clear bounding demarcation. His statements fall in no case into any of the forms of scholastic definition. Familiar ideas meet us at every step, but so hazy is the medium, that we dare not assure ourselves of the recognition. One who had learned them previously might have his knowledge refreshed here; but he could not learn them here for the first time, with any distinctness. There is not even an allusion to any dogmatic, still less to any symbolical system. The names of Luther, Calvin, Socinus, and Arminius do not even appear. At the same time, we are not prepared to say that error is often prominently taught on any important topic. To express our meaning in a word, the grand defect of the scheme is its *vagueness*. The

author trembles at every turn, lest he ascribe to an apostle some refinement of doctrine, derived from modern speculation; and this fear leads him to understate the plain signification of the text.

Our meaning will be more apparent if we collect the opinions of our author on one or two points. For this purpose we select the doctrines of the Trinity, the Decrees, and the Atonement. If these doctrines are found any where, it is in the writings of the apostles. Let us see with how much distinctness they are seen there by our author.

With the doctrine of the Trinity, we connect that of the Person of the Mediator. That Neander is not a Socinian, is apparent from the affectionate reverence with which he everywhere, and unreservedly, speaks of the Lord Jesus Christ. That he is not an Arian, is quite as manifest, from his making the revelation of the eternal God in the man Jesus, the fundamental doctrine of the gospel. We wish he had made it as easy for us to pronounce him an Athanasian. That he is not, we are far from affirming: but we dare not undertake to prove that he is from his works. The word 'Trinity,' so far as we remember, does not occur in this sketch of apostolic theology. We read much of the divinity of Christ, much of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit; but the formulas are mostly such as Sabellius might have employed. This may be explained by reference to the author's known repugnance to dogmatic distinctions and scholastic terms: yet we lament to observe so little to impugn the tenets of such teachers as Praxeas and Noetus; so little to assure us of more than one Person in the Godhead; and so total an omission of the hypostatic distinction. But we would not judge prematurely: and we request the reader to interpret the statements which follow, in their most favourable meaning.

“Accordingly, Christ is considered by the Apostle as in a twofold sense *the head of the church of God*. He distinguishes the divine and the human in the Saviour, and, according to this twofold reference, exhibits him in a twofold though vitally connected relation to the creation and to the universal church of God. Paul and John, for the purpose of designating the indwelling divinity of the Redeemer, employed the idea already formed among the Jewish theologians of a mediating divine principle of revelation, through which the whole creation is connected with the hidden, inconceivable essence of God. A primeval self-revelation of the hidden God, antecedent to all created life, the *Word* by which that hidden essence reveals itself, (as man reveals the secrets of his mind by *speech*), as hypostasized in a spirit in which the essence of Deity is represented in the most per-

fect manner ; this constitutes a universal revelation of the divine essence in distinction from the partial, individualized revelations of God in the variety of created beings. This is a designation of the idea of a self-revelation of God, (corresponding to the oriental cast of mind which is more addicted to symbols and images than to purely intellectual notions), which the whole creation presupposes, in which it has its root, and without which no sentiment respecting God could arise in the human soul. We are by no means justified in deducing this idea from Alexandrian Platonism, though a certain mode of expressing it, may be traced to that source. On the contrary, this idea, which found a point of junction in the theophanies of the Old Testament, and in the theory of revelation lying at their base, formed a natural transition from the legal Judaism, which placed an infinite chasm between God and Man, to the gospel by which this chasm was taken away, since it revealed God communicating himself to mankind, and establishing a vital communion between himself and them. The ideas of a divine utterance, which prescribed its mode of being to the creation—of a word by which God operates and reveals himself in the world—of an angel representing God and speaking in his name—of a divine wisdom presupposed through the universe—were so many connecting links for a contemplation which ascended from a revelation of God in the world, to his most absolute self-revelation. And it was a result of this mode of contemplation, that the appearance of Him who was to effect the realization of the idea of the theocracy and was its end, to whom all its preceding development had pointed as the most perfect self-revelation and communication of God in human nature, was acknowledged as the human appearance of the Word, from whom the whole creation and all the early revelations of God, the whole development of the theocracy, proceeded. When the idea of the Messiah was freed from its popular theocratic garb, it would assume that higher element of the idea of a communication of the Divine Being in the form of human nature.”

In the same connexion, and as against Strauss and the disciples of Hegel, he says :

“ Thus, too, the doctrine of the Son of God, as the son of Man in the sense of John and Paul, was not a mere isolated element accidentally mingled with Christianity, but it is closely connected with the whole nature of its doctrines and morals. God is no more a God at an infinite distance, but revealed in man ; a divine life in human form. But this peculiar principle of Christian morals, the idea of the pure humanity transformed by a divine life, obtains its true significance only in connexion with the doctrine of the historical Christ, as the God-man, the Redeemer of sinful humanity which from him must first receive the divine life, and persevere in constant unreserved dependence on him. The self-idolatry of pantheism, which denies equally the God and the Christ of the gospel, rests upon an entirely different basis, and is essentially opposed to it.”

“ He who is the image of the hidden incomprehensible God, he in whom that God revealed himself before all created existence, he who carries in himself the archetypes of all existences, in whom all earthly and heavenly beings, all invisible as well as visible powers,

have been created, by whom and in reference to whom all things are created, who is before all, and in whom (in connexion with whom) all beings continue to exist,—the same being, therefore, who is the head of all, of the whole all-comprehending kingdom of God, is also the head of the Church which belongs to him as his body (by virtue of his entering into communion corporeally with human nature); since he, as the first born from the dead, has become the first fruits of the new creation among mankind, that he may be the first of every order of beings; as he is the *πρωτοτοκος πασης κτισεως*, so also the *πρωτοτοκος της καινης κτισεως*. According to his divine being deduced from the original of the divine essence before the whole creation, he forms the medium for the origination of all created existence; as the Risen One before all others in glorified human nature, he forms the medium for the new spiritual creation which proceeds from him among mankind. This combination of reference to the twofold creation which finds its point of union in Christ as the God-man Redeemer, is also made in the expressions by which Paul distinguishes the nature of Christian faith from heathenism; 1 Cor. viii. 6;—one God the Father, from whom all existence proceeds, and to whose glory we as redeemed are conscious that we exist; and one Lord Jesus Christ (the mediator in our knowledge of God as Christians), through whom all things are created, and through whom, by means of the new creation, our destiny will be realized, so that our life and conduct will be referred to God, and be subservient to his glory.”

“With respect to John’s idea of the work of redemption, we meet first in his writings with an account of the appearance of Christ in the flesh, and its immediate impression on his religious self-consciousness. The life of Christ as the humanization of the divine, of which the design was to give a divine elevation to man, is the self-revelation of the divine Logos (as the revealing principle of the mysterious essence of God) in the form of humanity, appropriated by him in order to communicate divine life to human nature, and to transform it into a revelation of divine life. John’s remarkable words, ‘The Logos became man, and we have beheld his glory as it was revealed in humanity,’ describe the nature of Christ’s appearance, and what mankind would become through him who is the central point of Christian faith and life. The same sentiments are expressed in his First Epistle, ‘We announce to you as eye-witnesses the manifestation of the eternal fountain of life, which was the Father, in order that you may enter into fellowship with it.’ He states as the essential marks of this manifestation of the divine glory in human form, that he appeared full of grace and truth; *grace*, which means the communicative love of God, God as love; and *truth*, according to John’s conceptions of it, as we have already remarked, is not anything speculative and abstract, but proceeds from the life, and embraces the whole unity of the life, and hence is one with goodness and holiness. Truth is the essential predicate of the inward unity of the divine life; and Christ (in John’s gospel) calls himself the truth and the life. Hence, the ideas of love and holiness are the two divine attributes which (as far as it is possible to reduce John’s pregnant words to precise intellectual notions) will most nearly express what he represents as the characteristic of the glory of

God revealed in the life of Christ, and agree with his using love and holiness in his first epistle as designations of the divine being."

After a careful examination of the work, these are the nearest approaches to the orthodox statement, which we have been able to find, and we submit them to the judgment of the reader.

Upon the second point, namely the Decrees of God, we shall not be so unreasonable as to demand of a philosophic German an acquiescence in the Augustinian or Calvinistic doctrine; albeit we regard the latter as the highest reach of philosophy on this subject. And we cite his statements, principally with the view of confirming our previous remarks as to the vague and unsatisfactory manner in which he expresses opinions concerning questions, on which the conflicting opinions of the church have been antipodal. It will be seen that, negatively, he is distinct enough, in his abjuration of Gomarism.

In the ninth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, that *crux Arminianorum*, Neander acknowledges that there is something which might lead to the hasty opinion that Paul deemed the dispensation of grace to be irrespective of human determination—as if happiness and unhappiness were distributed among men by an unconditional predestination; and as if he deduced the different reception of truth among men from a divine causation arranging everything by unchangeable necessity. But this, according to our author, would land us in fatalistic Pantheism, and afford a fair ground of excuse to sinners. In the apostle's reasoning therefore, we are to see no more than a reference to that divine wisdom, whose proceedings are not to be calculated beforehand, according to any contracted human theory; and to a superabounding grace of God, which anticipates all human merit, reigns over all and explains all. He thus shows his view of the apostle's advice on this point to believers:

"The divine counsel of salvation must necessarily be fulfilled in them, nor could the accomplishment of this unchangeable divine decree be presented by anything which might happen to them in life; on the contrary all things would serve to prepare for its accomplishment, everything which they might meet with in life must contribute to their salvation. This is the practical connexion of ideas in Rom. viii. 28, &c., those whom God in his eternal intuition has recognised as belonging to him through Christ, he has also predetermined that they should be conformed to the archetype of his Son, since he having risen from the dead in his glorified humanity, must be the first-born among many brethren. But those whom he had predestined to this

end, he has also called to it; those whom he has called, he has also justified; those whom he has justified, he has also glorified. The train of thought is therefore this: first the divine idea of Christ, and of mankind contemplated in him, the divine counsel to realize this idea in believers; to conform them as redeemed to the archetype of Christ by the completion of the new creation. Then the gradual accomplishment of this counsel: first, the calling to believe (in the Pauline sense, the outward and the inward call are taken in combination for the production of faith), as believers they become justified, and with believing the realization of the dignity of the children of God begins in their inward life. That God gave up his Son in order to secure this blessing to them, is a sure pledge of their obtaining it, and that nothing which appears to stand in the way shall really obstruct, but on the contrary must serve to advance it. Consequently, this doctrine of predestination and election, in the Pauline sense, is nothing else but the application of the general counsel of God for the redemption of mankind through Christ as the ground of salvation to those in whom it is accomplished by virtue of their believing. The greatness and certainty of the dignity of Christians is thus evinced: but nothing is determined respecting the relation of the divine choice to the free determination of the human wills. When Paul, in Eph. i. 4. represents Christians as objects of the divine love before the foundation of the world, his object is to show that Christianity was not inferior to Judaism as a new dispensation, but was in fact the most ancient and most original, and presupposed by Judaism itself, the election in Christ preceded the election of the Jewish nation in their forefathers; and redemption the verification of the archetype of humanity through Christ and proceeding from him, is the end of the whole terrestrial creation, so that everything else appears as a preparation for this highest object in the counsel of creation in reference to this world."

Upon Redemption and Atonement, while the phraseology of Neander is altogether his own, his views, we are happy to say, bear a much closer resemblance to what we regard as saving truth. The doctrines of Redemption by Christ, and Salvation by Faith, are favourite doctrines. To Christ, as a personal Saviour, he delights to look, with all that affectionate reliance which belongs to the old German theology. Under strange and philosophic formulas, we seem now and then to detect the familiar doctrines of proper vicarious sacrifice, and satisfaction to divine justice: often, however, we find ourselves beyond our depth.

The teaching of Paul, according to Neander, distinguishes in the work of Christ, his doing and his suffering. To sin, which from the first transgression, has reigned over all mankind, he opposes the perfect holy life of Christ. "To the evil whose consummation is death, representing itself as punishment in connexion with sin by virtue of the feeling of guilt and condemnation founded in the conscience,

he opposes the sufferings of Christ as the Holy One ; which, as they have no reference to sins of his own, can only relate to the sins of all mankind, for whose redemption they were endured." Paul opposes to the one sin of Adam, the one holy work of Christ. As by one sin, condemnation and death spread among all mankind ; so from this one holy life of Christ, holiness and "a life of eternal happiness resulted for all mankind." Him who knew no sin, the sinless one, God has made a sinner, has allowed to appear as a sufferer on account of sin, that we might become through him the righteousness of God ; or such as may appear before God as righteous. But the atonement does not reconcile God to man, but man to God. (p. 252.)*

"The holiness of God manifests itself (according to the Panline connexion of ideas already noticed) in the life and death of Christ in a twofold manner. First, inasmuch as he completely realized (in opposition to sin which had hitherto been predominant in human nature) that holy law to which the life of man was designed to correspond,—made satisfaction to the moral order of the universe, and glorified God in that nature which was originally designed to glorify him. God has verified himself as the Holy One, since he forgives sin only on the condition of the perfect fulfilment of the law ; he has shown that he remits nothing from the requirements of perfect holiness, and we always bear in mind that this remission to those who through it obtain justification, is not a mere outward act, but becomes in all the cause and pledge of the fulfilment of the law. Secondly, inasmuch as Christ, as perfectly holy, underwent those sufferings which the divine holiness, considered as punitive justice in its opposition against sin, had suspended over human nature. We are not to conceive of this, as if God arbitrarily imposed these sufferings, or Christ had arbitrarily subjected himself to them ; but that it was grounded on the assumption of human nature in its present condition and relation to God—as the divine punitive justice revealed itself to them who were suffering the consequences of sin—and thus it was accomplished through the historical developement of the life of Christ devoted to conflict with the sin that reigned in the human race, and through his condescending to their condition from the sympathy of love."

* In justice to our author, the reader is requested to compare his statement in another work. After saying that the believer can never rest his justification on his own works, he adds ; "It would, indeed, fare badly with the Christian,

In the words last quoted, there are expressions which, however far they fall short of sound scriptural teaching on this point, nevertheless, when favourably interpreted, go further than anything in the book to free Neander from the charge of ascribing to the Atonement an efficacy only subjective.

Upon the subject of a general Judgment, Neander is obscure, and in regard to his opinion on eternal punishment he is studiously silent.* His idea of the Church is that of a purely spiritual body, independent of all external signs and all human intervention. He places in perpetual light the high-priesthood of Christ, and the universal priesthood of believers. The unity of the church consists in its union with its sole Head. It is to illustrate this principle, that all his historical labours have been undertaken. If the consciousness of this unity were retained, he believes that amidst all the differences of sect, this would be the most glorious bond of catholic union; and no outward constitution, "no system of episcopacy, no council, still less any organization by the State," could render the idea of a Christian church more real or concrete.

In looking back upon the ground over which this accomplished, ardent and delightful writer has led us, and in reconsidering the peculiarities of his scheme, both good and evil, we are more and more inclined to trace his singular deviations from the beaten way of orthodox divinity, to his grand characteristic opinion, that Christianity is a development. If this proposition is understood of subjective Christianity, nothing could be more safe or more important. The Kingdom of God, as light, as leaven, and as fire, will

if on such weak ground as this, he had to build his justification, if he did not know that 'if he confesses his sins, and walks in the light, as he is in the light, the blood of Jesus Christ his son cleanses from all sin.' Paul, therefore, refers even the redeemed, disturbed by the reproaches of conscience, amidst the conflicts and trials of life, not to the work of Christ *in them*, but to what the love of Christ has done *for them*, and which, notwithstanding their own continued sinfulness, remains sure." *Gelegenheitschriften*, p. 23.

* There is indeed a note on the subject; but to what extent it compromises the author, we leave to be judged. It refers to the salvation of all. "The doctrine of such a universal restitution, would not stand in contradiction to the doctrine of eternal punishment, as it appears in the gospels; for although those who are hardened in wickedness, left to the consequences of their conduct, their merited fate, have to expect endless unhappiness, yet a secret decree of the divine compassion is not necessarily excluded, by virtue of which, through the wisdom of God revealing itself in the discipline of free agents, they will be led to a free appropriation of redemption."

go on until it has reached new subjects, and affected all souls. Divine Truth will be—not more clearly revealed—but more fully comprehended; and the result will be the subjugation of all human minds on earth. But if the meaning is, that the objective revelation of truth is a developement; that, as the gospel was unfolded from the root of Judaism, so a future growth is yet to spring from scriptural Christianity, and perpetually bud and bloom into new truths and systems, in comparison with which the New Testament is but a germ,—we confess we regard the opinion as fundamentally erroneous. Such an assumption lies equally at the basis of the modern pantheistic theology and the figments of St. Simonianism. And the history of modern opinion in Germany teaches us, that there is no safety in any lower ground than that of the Reformers, and in the more rigid views of divine inspiration. If, as is maintained, theology is advancing, and maturing itself by new discoveries, the progress should bear a closer analogy with the march of other sciences. More positive truth should be brought to light. Dogmatic statements should be more clear and explicit. Definitions and distinctions should be precise and above the danger of mistake. Great principles having been ascertained, the more minute ramifications of truth should be made apparent. But instead of this, the whole tendency of German theology, including that of the work before us, has been a marked retrocession from all fixed points. Dimness and generality have succeeded to precision and unequivocal enunciation. Formulas have been adopted, which may be the vehicles as well of error as of truth. And the prospect was never less, than at the present moment, of anything like a new creation.

“I cannot agree” says Neander, “with the conviction of those who think that this new creation will be only a repetition of what took place in the sixteenth or seventeenth century, and that the whole dogmatic system, and the entire mode of contemplating divine and human things, must return as it then existed.” Neither can we; but at the same time we must protest against those who would sweep away as rubbish the whole of that glorious structure, with cries of *Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof*. We have no respect for speculations which refuse all aid from those great spirits whom God raised up. They militate against their own theory of developement. Rejecting that theory, in its excess, we nevertheless do not believe

that every race is to lay a new foundation. The system of the reformers was not only a great advance upon that which it superseded, but was vastly superior to that which would now displace it. The same service which was rendered to Luther and Calvin by Augustine, may be rendered to Neander and Twisten by Luther and Calvin. Though we would not swear by the names of these masters, we would, if the question were inevitable, prefer the system of any one of them, as a whole, to that of the work under review. We would adopt the *Loci Communes* of Melancthon or of Peter Martyr, in preference to any dogmatic system which modern Germany has produced. Nay, we are so thoroughly convinced, that honest, bold and categorical declarations are better than wavering ambiguities and transcendental amphibologies, that, we would rather let a pupil take his chance of truth between two opposite systems, for instance those of Arminius and Gomar, than to refer him to the misty generalities of the ablest modern syncretist.

After all the alleged improvements in theological research, we never feel so much disposed to take down one of the old Latin dogmatic writers of the seventeenth century, as immediately on closing a fresh work from Germany. These antiquated writers have a thousand faults, it may be; they are stiff, they are prolix, they are technical, they are intolerant and austere, they are scholastic in their distinctions, but they have one great merit—they always let us know what they mean. Their atmosphere, if wintry and biting, is clear. They boldly march up to difficulties, and beard even those which they fail to conquer. Their dialectic was an armour of proof, which might be used as well on the wrong as on the right side, but it was of the finest temper, and of such weight as to be unwieldy to champions of our day. The frequent perusal of their disquisitions has a value independent of the truths evolved. It promotes patient thought, prompts to exact definition, whets the discriminative acumen, and exercises the intellect in logical strategy. Especially does it beget a repugnance to dreamy contemplation and the use of vague diction for concealment. It is precisely this point in which lies the great difference between the two classes of writers. It is a difference not so much of opinion or system, as of intellectual habitude. The clearness which we applaud, is found not only in Turretine Rivet, and Chamier, but in Crellius, Grotius and Le Clerc. That objects are made more luminous in the writings of the

orthodox, we readily grant ; for whatsoever doth make manifest, is light. It is this description of writers, and this style of disquisition, which we would unhesitatingly recommend to young theologians. They have one obvious claim upon our preference, that they accord in their chief peculiarities with the characteristic of the American, or what is the same thing, the British mind. It is the school from which proceeded the clear-sighted and unambiguous Bulls, Pearsons, Chillingworths, Tillotsons, Baxters, Watsons, Edwardses, and Paleys, of a former age. On the other hand, the taste for German writers on dogmatic theology, is factitious, alien to the genius of the Anglo-American mind, and productive, wherever it exists, of debilitating and rhapsodical musing.

Our current of remark has led us into some strictures, which do not apply in all their force to the great writer before us. Indeed we are afraid it may seem to border on arrogance, that we should have ventured to take any exception to the works of a venerable theologian and noble scholar, who is perhaps the most celebrated professor of Germany, and whose works we never open without instruction and delight. But however sincere our feeling of all this may be, the duty of pointing out error, according to the measure of our ability, is imperative. While the work of Neander remained in its German dress, we felt no desire to take it up, though within our reach ; but now that it has appeared in a translation, from the press of a popular and enterprising publisher, we have seen no way to escape from our conviction.

J. V. Moore

- ART. II.—1. *The Missionary Chronicle*: Containing the proceedings of the Board of Foreign Missions, and of the Board of Missions of the Presbyterian Church and a general view of other benevolent operations. Vol. XII. January, 1844.
2. *The Missionary Herald*: Containing the proceedings of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, with a view of other benevolent operations. Vol. XL. January, 1844.

THE Missionary enterprise is at present, unquestionably, the characteristic movement of the church. Whatever be