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No. II.

J. A. Alexander
ART. I.—*Notes, explanatory and practical, on the Gospels: designed for Sunday School Teachers and Bible Classes.* By Albert Barnes. *In two volumes. Fourth edition—each edition contains two thousand.* New York and Boston, 1834, 12mo.

THOUGH we hardly have a right to notice, as a new work, one which has been so long in circulation, and with which so many of our readers are familiar, we feel ourselves called upon as Christian critics, to say what we think of Mr. Barnes's expositions. This we shall do as plainly and as kindly as we can. As our object is simply to characterize a book, which is likely to exert a very durable and extensive influence, we shall confine ourselves entirely to an enumeration of the points in which we think it worthy either of praise or censure. We have only to premise that our conclusions have been mostly drawn from the notes on Matthew and John, especially the former, though we have so far compared the rest as to remain convinced, that the first part of the work is a sample of the whole. Throughout our strictures, we shall endeavour to be pointed and specific, referring when we can, to individual examples, both of defect and merit, though it be at the risk of seeming sometimes hypercritical, a reproach which can scarcely

decided and "home to his purpose." Now, if Episcopacy had been meant to be taught in Scripture, as the only authorized model of church order; and if the New Testament had been intended to be a sure guide in this matter; can any reflecting man believe that the inspired writers would have written as they have done in relation to ecclesiastical order? We will venture to say, it is impossible! When they had occasion to speak so frequently concerning Christian character and hope; concerning the church, its nature, foundation, head, laws, ministers, and interests; it is truly marvellous, if they had thought as the writer of this pamphlet does, that they should not have told us something more explicit respecting "orders of clergy;" the mischiefs of "parity;" the danger of departure from the regular "succession;" and the fundamental importance of contending for an "authorized priesthood." Had their opinions been those of the author of this Tract, they *could* not have been silent, or have spoken doubtfully respecting these points. They would have dwelt upon them in every connexion; have repeated them at every turn; and have made *this subject* clear, whatever else was left in the dark. Now, as it is granted, on all sides, that they HAVE NOT DONE THIS; as Episcopalians themselves acknowledge that NO ONE of the inspired writers has done it, or is at all EXPLICIT on the subject; it is as plain as any moral demonstration can be, that the principles and claims of this pamphlet were then unknown, and, consequently, have no divine warrant.

Samuel Miller

ART. VII.—*The Annual of the Board of Education of the Presbyterian Church in the United States: a New Year's Offering for 1835. Edited by John Breckinridge, A. M. Corresponding Secretary of the Board. Philadelphia, 1835.*

We have lately had occasion to advert to the importance of the Board of Education, as a means of promoting purity and union in the church. Recent events have led us to regard it, in another point of view, as a defence against the

efforts which are making to subvert the principles of Presbyterianism with respect to a learned ministry. Our Board of Education is a sort of pledge, that the strong position taken by our fathers, after years of experiment, and doubt, and conflict, is not to be relinquished. This consideration seems to give new importance to the influence of the Board, and invests its publications with a two-fold interest. The *Annual* of this year has afforded us much pleasure, and we would gladly furnish a detailed account of it, if we thought it necessary; but the book itself is so generally known that description is superfluous.* Assuming therefore that our readers have seen and admired it for themselves, we shall merely express our pleasure, that amidst the strong incitements which it offers to religious effort, it does not fail to plead the cause of intellectual culture as a part of Christian duty. We thank the Editor for committing himself and the Board of Education so decisively on this point. We are fully persuaded that by means of his *Annual* (not to mention other methods) he has it in his power to do much in the way of stemming that impetuous torrent of sanctimonious barbarism, which threatens, even within our church, to carry all before it. Its waves beat now against our colleges and schools, but the hour is coming when the flood, if not assuaged, will aim at the submersion of the pulpit and the press. Jesuitism without, and fanaticism within, uncongenial as they seem, are seeking the same centre—total darkness. It is a most portentous fact, that our religious radicals, in their zeal for pious effort, denounce contention with the papists as unauthorized and useless. Let us learn to look both ways in self-defence; and let us steadfastly adhere to the true Presbyterian policy—the fixed Presbyterian principle—*Christianity and Civilization, Piety and Learning*. What God hath joined together let not man put asunder. Upon this point, we solicit the attention of our readers to a few considerations, which, though not directly founded on the work before us, have an intimate connexion with its ultimate design, and may perhaps have some influence on its future character.

* We are sorry to say, that the *Memoir* of Dr. Rice contains some errors which are really surprising, as the sources of information were so perfectly accessible. The subject was well chosen; nothing could be more appropriate to the work. Dr. Rice was a living demonstration that there is no repugnance between piety and learning, between diligence at home and activity abroad.

The prosperity of the Presbyterian Church, in the United States, has been so remarkable, that we are compelled to seek an instrumental cause for it, in the course of policy which she has pursued. That cause may, we think, be found in her adherence to the principle, that piety and learning are indispensable and inseparable requisites in the Christian ministry. This has kindled her zeal for general improvement. We need not say how disproportionate a quota Presbyterians have contributed to the cause of education. With far less than half of our religious population, they have sustained far more than half our public institutions. We say this not in a spirit of boasting, but rather of shame and sorrow; for our object is to animadvert upon the dereliction of this Presbyterian principle. There can be no doubt that we have somewhat receded from our safe and strong position. There are two degrees of retrocession which may be observed. The first step consists in the wanton rejection of ascertained principles and established methods of instruction, and the gratuitous substitution of new-fangled expedients. We have no allusion here to any of the real improvements which experience has sanctioned, but to visionary schemes of revolutionary change. The second step is the open depreciation of the value of all learning, and the practical adoption of that dangerous sophism, broached by the Caliph Omar, that learning without religion is ruinous, and with religion useless. The former and less alarming of these symptoms shows itself in our public schools; the latter in our church courts, our religious journals, and society at large. Both are elicited, if not produced, by the characteristic tendency of the present age to officious, bustling zeal, and mere out-of-door activity. "Aggressive movement" is the cant phrase of the day, and learning is scoffed at, as the rubbish of the cloister. Against this sophistical and insidious nonsense we solemnly protest, and shall sustain our protest, by showing the effects of this delusion on the church, and more particularly on our own communion. In so doing, we shall take no special pains to discriminate between the two degrees of deterioration, specified above. The second is a necessary product of the first. The very disposition to tamper with experiment, in a matter so important as the training of the mind, betrays a spirit of revolutionary radicalism, a spirit which can no more be at rest, than the troubled sea which casts up mire and dirt. The rejection of Greek and Latin on the one

hand, or of mathematics on the other, as a necessary part of liberal education, is the first step of jacobinical reform. It is so in point of principle, and it is so in point of fact. One modest "aggressive movement," in opposition to the lessons of experience, is always followed up by another and another, till the aggregate wisdom of a thousand years is convicted of folly on the inquest and verdict of newspaper-scribblers and unsuccessful pedagogues. The exclusion of Latin, as a part of theological training, so far from implying a contempt for education, seems at first sight to concede its vast importance, and to aim at its perfection. But we venture to predict, that this specious skin will soon be cast. The very arguments which are used in support of this new measure betray its true nativity. Those who can argue against classical training on the absolute score of its pernicious moral tendency, and make this counterbalance its ascertained advantages, are either resolved to explode it at all hazards, and by all means, fair or foul, or are themselves so unacquainted with it, in their own experience, as to imagine that the common routine of school-books comprehends the whole. The introduction of the "Leipzig Classics" into general use would enable the teacher to select ancient writings far more pure in spirit and precept than many of the most admired of the standard English writers. When some men urge the substitution of the British classics for those of Greece and Rome, do they really believe that the *Cyropaedia*, the *Tusculan Questions*, or the letters of Cicero, Seneca, and Pliny (not to name a hundred others) are more dangerous to the morals than the *Tatler* and *Spectator*, or the works of Pope and Swift? There may be a selection, it is true, of English classics, and so may there be of Greek and Latin. The radicals of learning ought to know that the range of classical literature is not to be measured by the *curta supellex* of a manual-labour school. We have mentioned this as a sufficient proof that the spirit of innovation in our modes of education, is a spirit whose sympathies are not with cultivation and sound knowledge, but with sciolism, and ignorance, and restless love of change. And this we plead as a sufficient reason for confounding the two phases of decline which we have mentioned, and regarding these new-fangled systems of instruction as mere preparations for the ultimate disuse of instruction altogether.

We have said that we would show the effects of this incipient revolution. By this we did not mean to promise

a development of facts not generally known. The proofs of our position are already in every man's possession, who is at all familiar with the actual state of the Presbyterian Church. We shall merely combine and state them so as to make them bear upon our present object. We shall not even attempt to prove the reality of the change in sentiment and practice which we have been asserting. On this point our readers will not ask for documentary evidence. They have abundant proof in the growing facility of access to the ministry, in the current phrases of our journalists and orators, and in the express avowals which are now beginning to be made in divers places.

The first effect which we shall mention of this retrograde movement in the Presbyterian Church, is, that it impairs our respectability. While society at large continues to respect real learning and refinement, no religious body which undervalues either, can expect to hold a commanding station in the public eye. This is not an argument addressed to worldly pride. For what can we accomplish unless we are respected? Fanatics always dream that by their zeal and boldness, they can brave public sentiment or awe it into friendship; but sooner or later they awake from this persuasion, and behold it is a dream. Loss of respectability must involve a loss of influence, unless society itself makes a backward stride towards barbarism. A church which would honour God and save the souls of men, must stand above the world, in every thing connected with the great design for which it was established. If learning be an instrument of spiritual good, the church should possess it in surpassing measure. The perversion of learning is not to be corrected by throwing it away, but by devoting it to God. What we thus lose in influence, others gain. Knowledge is power after all; though the maxim has been trolled about by school boys and declaimers, till it seems to be a jest. This power *will* be exercised. Its effect having once been ascertained, it is folly to suppose that it will ever be neglected. It may change hands, but that is all. And we ought to know that while we are consenting to forego this power, others stand ready to receive it at our hands. Let it be marked, as a most instructive fact, that while many Presbyterians are receding from their ancient post of usefulness and honour, other denominations are advancing towards it. While we begin to doubt the necessity of learning, or at least give ear to fanatical assaults upon it,

Methodist colleges and Baptist schools rise like an exhalation. Do we reproach our brethren for their generous emulation? God forbid. We wish them all success. Were it only as an acknowledgment that we are in the right, their imitation would be grateful. But must we retire, to give them room? Is not learning a republic, in which nation and nation, sect and sect, may strive on equal terms? We put it to the conscience, not the pride, of Presbyterians—ought we, at the very time when sister churches are practically recognising our distinctive principles of religious policy, ought we ourselves to treat them with contempt? We wish that we could state the case as clearly and as strongly as its importance merits. We do not say that we are bound to struggle for pre-eminence; but we do say that we have no right to lose what we have gained. We cannot, we ought not, to impede the march of others, but we ought to impede and arrest our own retreat. For our own part we rejoice in the steady progression of improvement among other denominations. We rejoice in it even for the sake of our own church. For we know that with respect to us, it must have one of two effects: it must raise us to new honour or plunge us in disgrace; and the latter may, for aught we know, be the appointed remedy for the fever of fanaticism under which we labour.

But a mere transfer of intellectual and religious influence from one denomination to another, might be deeply wounding to the pride of the losing party, without materially injuring the cause of truth. The same amount of influence might continue to be steadily exerted on the mass of men, while the change of instrumentality employed might serve as a salutary chastisement to an unfaithful agent. We have no right to say then that a simple change of our relative position as to other sects, would itself be any shock to Christianity at all. But alas! who so simple as to fancy, that the power which we lose would always pass into Christian hands? Had the resources of Harvard College, when lost by the supineness of the orthodox Congregationalists, fallen under the control of Methodists, or evangelical Episcopalians, there might have been room for regret, but not for lamentation. Harvard and Hollis might, by their endowments, have been made instrumental in maintaining error; but they would not have been forced by treacherous violence into a posthumous denial of the Lord that bought them. Another motive, therefore, for maintaining

our position, is the impossibility of knowing who will occupy it after us. We might, by divine grace, be willing to fall back and let our brethren in the common faith assume the foremost rank; but are we willing that a Jefferson or Cooper should usurp it? Dare we, from blind deference to a few ambitious sophists, or gratuitous sympathy with a crowd of weak enthusiasts—dare we forsake our standards and our places in the host? The motive here presented is no fictitious one. The process by which the work of education is to be wrested from the hands of the ministers of Christ has already begun. It is already becoming fashionable to make laymen heads of colleges, and though in particular cases we heartily assent to the superior qualifications of the person chosen, and acquiesce in the propriety of the measure *pro hac vice*, we dissent entirely from the general principle that our public institutions ought not to be under clerical control. The efficient teachers in every age have been religious teachers. The Christian ministry has taught the Christian world. There is scarcely an university or college in existence, which was not founded for the service of the church, and which has not by the church been fostered and controlled. And who can complain that the trust has been abused? Who will pretend to think that the work of education would have been better done, if Harvard, and Yale, and Nassau Hall had, from their first foundation, been consigned to men of secular professions, and hermetically sealed against clerical pollution, after the manner of Stephen Girard? No honest man will say it; no intelligent man believes it; if any do, let the college of South Carolina disabuse them. The substitution of lay for clerical presidents may sometimes be intended to allay sectarian prejudice—an end which it cannot answer—or to provide for special exigencies; but we are persuaded that those who contend for the general principle, and strive to excite a prejudice against the other system, are not so much the foes of clergymen as of Christianity.

But this by the bye. What we wish to state distinctly is the fact, that when a commanding influence on the training of our youth is lost by any portion of the church, it is far less likely to remain within the church, than to fall into the hands of enemies. Experience has taught us this sad lesson. It is no longer a matter of surmise or conjecture, that the skeptic and the scoffer are in ambush. To supplant the clergy in the business of instruction is their wildest stratagem. What

may not be expected in the way of degradation and disaster, when the nation shall have become familiar with the sight of such men as Owen and Kneeland in Professors' chairs? and perhaps of such viragos as Fanny Wright at the head of Universities, male or female?

If such be the actual or prospective consequences of the backward step which we have charged upon our church, it is needless to inquire, in general terms, what ought to be her policy. As a church she ought, in all her branches, to require with undeviating strictness, piety and learning as inseparable prerequisites to the preaching of the gospel. But it is not by the action of church courts alone, or even mainly, that the work is to be done. The principles which ought to govern ecclesiastical proceedings, in relation to this matter, are so very obvious and so generally admitted, that we need not pause to state them. With a simple expression of our wishes, therefore, that the genuine Presbyterian policy may be steadfastly maintained, in all authoritative acts, sneer and complaint to the contrary notwithstanding, we shall turn to the more important practical question—What must individual members of our body do, to maintain this sterling principle? If this inquiry is beginning to be made, with a feeling of its moment, by our younger brethren, we hail it as an omen of increased prosperity. If any thing that we can say should tend to excite an interest not yet generally felt, or to suggest expedients not yet generally practised, we shall have gained our end.

To our younger ministers, and to such as are preparing for the office, our advice is—do not be imposed upon. Do not be cheated by sophistry, or borne down by impudence. Young theologians are exposed to both these dangers. There are two powerful causes which contribute to pervert the unripe judgment. One is the tincture which religious phraseology has received from the prevalence of the errors against which we are contending. The current slang of the religious world is full of allusions to the march of mind, the fall of scholastic systems, &c. &c. The influence of forms of speech is really astonishing. No sooner is a new cant phrase divulged from the pulpit or the press, than it is gobbled down and reproduced by a host of newspaper editors, travelling agents, and anniversary orators. Thus ratified by what is now called "public sentiment," the phrase becomes a principle, and is deemed a sufficient counterpoise, both to reason and expe-

rience. Against this continual dropping who is proof? Who can wonder that our young men are betrayed into gaping admiration of the "*moral power*," the "*aggressive movement*," and the "*march of mind*," with which their ears are made to tingle. The effect is natural; in the case of some, remediless. After a certain period the mind, as it were, grows rigid, and retains the figure of its mould forever. Such we consign to the incurable ward, and turn to those who are not beyond the reach of medicine. These we exhort not to be seduced, by any amount of cant, into a belief that our fathers were all fools, and that wisdom is to die with a few loud talkers of the present generation.

The other circumstance which helps this sad delusion, is the unfortunate success with which some men have laboured to identify zeal and active effort with hostility to learning. The flood of religious phrenzy which of late swept over us, shed a gleam of lurid light upon the church and country; but it has ceased to play upon the cold and bitter waters. It is false, that education and extensive learning damp the fire of pious zeal. They only quench the smouldering embers of fanatical excess. Too much has been conceded to the Vandal and the Goth. In union with true piety no amount of learning ever did a jot of mischief. Let us do the Puritans and Reformers justice.

He who goes forth into the ministry, free from these hurtful influences, goes forth under happy auspices. But such, alas, are rare, though their number, we trust, is every day increasing. Such, whether few or many, we exhort to adopt, as a principle, that ignorance cannot be "the mother of devotion." There are many worthy men who theoretically acknowledge the value of education, but who seem to regard it as a sort of worldly advantage which the Christian ought to sacrifice. It is no such thing; and we despair of reformation, while the friends of learning plead for it with a trembling voice and an uneasy conscience. If knowledge is indeed the foe of truth—oh monstrous paradox!—it should not be defended at all. This vacillation is the genuine effect of the taint which has been given to public sentiment. The ground on which we rest the vindication of learning is the ground of religious principle. When we take the part of literature and science, it is not as worldly Christians plead for theatres and balls. The church is *bound* to promote sound knowledge, intellectual cultivation, social refinement, and the useful arts. She not only may, but must. This is

the point to which we would bring the younger clergy. The promotion of learning has been left too much to the worldly and the lukewarm. Let our young men show that it is perfectly compatible with ardent zeal for God, and the mouth of calumnious barbarism is forever stopped.

This must be done, not by occasional but constant effort. The whole tenor of a minister's conduct should be in favour of improvement. The want of opportunity can never be alleged. Where common schools are wanting, they may be provided; where they are bad, they may be bettered. Intelligent clergymen can do more for this end than any legislative body. Where schools of a higher order are established, ministers of the Gospel ought to be interested in them, and to show it, not by lending their names as referees to a printed puff, but by personal encouragement, assistance, and advice. That pastor who allows a grammar school within his bounds to exist unnoticed, may be a good man, but he is not a wise one. To use a favourite phrase, he does not know the power of moral machinery. A very strong impulse is often given to the improvement of society by the mere erection of an academy in some new situation. Besides the knowledge formally imparted to the pupils, new objects of attention are made known to many families, with an exciting and elevating effect. The instructions of the pulpit and the society of the pastor are enjoyed with greater relish, his influence grows with the general advancement, and religion prospers by the aid of education. Is there any place on earth where all this may not happen? where schools may not be either fostered or established? Those who make the rudeness of their people an apology for their own, are unjust stewards. The evil might be done away by effort and example.

While these means of usefulness are within the reach of all, some ministers have additional advantages, from being near a college. Where nothing in the character of the college itself forbids, the clergy ought to labour for it, by correcting and subduing vulgar prejudices against it, by exciting an interest in its welfare, and by promoting its improvement. It cannot be said of colleges as of schools, that the more there are the better. The multiplication of our higher institutions is excessive and injurious. Nor ought a monopoly to be encouraged. The number of such establishments should be determined by the means enjoyed for making them

respectable and useful. But in any case, the policy and duty of the clergy is to take their part and to do them good. Let no young minister presume to teach his people, by precept or example, that colleges are convents, and that a four years' course of study is an exploded humbug. There are many who thus speak, but they are either such as have disgraced their Alma Mater, or such as, to use their own expression, "have never rubbed the whitewash from a college wall," much less the mould of ignorance from their own incrustated souls. Let such refute themselves; but let the pious and enlightened clergy see to it, that they do not catch this spirit. A pure and progressive revival of religion, with a general diffusion of knowledge—and they will always go together—would do more to promote the "march of mind" and hasten the latter day glory, than all the whirlwinds of fanatical excitement can effect till the end of time. Enlightened zeal is fertilizing; zeal without knowledge covers the earth first with blight and then with darkness.

Much good may be done in the way that we have suggested by men who have themselves been imperfectly instructed. As sensible though uneducated parents often feel an ardent wish for the improvement of their children, so many who have "fallen upon evil times" in their own theological training, may labour and pray for the better education of their juniors in the ministry. Such however can of course never contribute so effectively to this important end, as those who have experienced the advantages of culture. How important is it then that our preachers should be thoroughly prepared for their work! Let students of theology remember that their future influence in a thousand ways depends upon the years of their probation. If the young men who are even now indulging idle dreams about energetic and aggressive action, as opposed to theoretical and systematic study, could be put a few years forward in prophetic vision, they would despise their own absurdity. They would gather up the very fragments of improvement. They would pray for docility and common sense. They would go forth fixed in opposition to that fanatical vulgarism which hates the light. They would preach the gospel, not the march of mind, and civilize men, while they helped to save their souls. They would promote revivals by the truth, and not by stage tricks: they would aim at moral not theatrical effect. We are fully persuaded that

the impure zeal which constitutes fanaticism is the growth of ignorance. Nothing but sanctified knowledge will destroy it.

These considerations are enough to show how desirable it is that our clergy, in pursuing their preparatory studies, should be under such an influence as will fit them for exertion in behalf of Christian learning. We may go still further, and suggest the good effects which could not fail to follow, if our ministers were fitted by their previous training, not only to espouse the cause of liberal education, but, in case of need, to engage in the work themselves. This we know is a delicate subject, and we do not look for the concurrence of our readers in all that we shall say. Many indeed will be astonished at our rashness in proposing that candidates for the ministry should have an eye to literary stations. This feeling arises in a measure from the habit of regarding instruction as an employment merely secular. That it is so, is the fault of Christian ministers. We do not recommend academical office as an object for the aims of theological students. But we contend, that a higher standard of professional education, while it would mightily conduce to ministerial success, would help to meet the growing demand for public teachers, and in that way keep the engine of popular instruction under religious influence. When important personal service can be rendered by a minister as a teacher of youth, he ought not to be deterred by an idea that the business is at variance with his calling. Why will men overlook the end, in their attention to the mere formalities of the means? Did not the lamented Dr. Wisner preach the gospel as really from his office in the Missionary Rooms, as he did from his pulpit in the Old South Church? Did not Samuel Finley, William Graham, and other genuine Presbyterians of the good old stamp, preach the gospel in their school-rooms? Does not the man who sends forth ten pious men, thorough scholars and sound thinkers, into the service of the church, preach the gospel as effectually as any pastor? The very fact that such a teacher is excluding jesuits and infidels from power, is enough to cover his retreat. Let no man trifle with so serious a business, by sacrificing usefulness to ease or lucre; but when God calls a man to teach, the school-room is as safe and as sacred as the church.

The Editor of the volume now before us will be the last to complain of our making it a hook on which to hang a

dissertation. The cause which we have endeavoured to maintain, is as dear to his heart as to ours, and there is perhaps no individual in the church, who is more disposed or better able, *ex officio* and in person, to reform existing evils. For his influence on the side of truth and genuine Christian policy, our church is much his debtor. Mr. Breckinridge, we trust, will not grow weary in well doing. As the efficient organ of our Board of Education, he is in some sense the representative of Presbyterian sentiments with respect to learning. We are aware that the direct and primary object of that charity is to supply the church with Pastors; but its very name implies that learning is essential to the ministerial office. We need not say how potent such an organization might be, in diffusing just opinions and inducing a right practice through the church at large. As we said before, we look with pleasure to the Board of Education as a permanent memorial of Presbyterian principles, however adverse to Presbyterian practice. Its periodical communications to the objects of its charity, may be highly instrumental in correcting vulgar errors, and in persuading our young men, that the classical training which prepared Pitt and Fox for their political pre-eminence, and the scientific training which enabled Martyn to confute the Persian Mollahs, cannot be so unfriendly to effective action, as our radicals assert. Even since we began to write, we have seen new attestations to the worth of sound instruction, from more than one of our brethren in the missionary field, who have learned to look upon the sciences with other eyes than when they were in college. So strong indeed is the evidence to this point, that some of our neighbours are denouncing war against missionary schools as hinderances to the gospel. This is perfectly consistent, and we patiently await the unblushing application of the same grand principle, in its length and breadth, at home. In the mean time, let our Board of Education, by its direct and indirect influence, raise the standard of improvement higher and higher, unawed by the clamour of the ignorant and restless, unmoved (to use the words of a true-blue Calvinistic Presbyterian) *stolido furore quem illi zelum vocant*.*

* Calvin (in Epist.)