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ART. I.

HENRY STEPHENS.

By B. L. GILDERSLEEVE, Ph. D., Richmond, Va.

Essai sur la Vie et les Ouvrages de Henri Estienne. Par Léon Feugère, Professeur de Rhétorique au Lycée Louis-le-Grand. Paris: 1853.

About the commencement of the XVIth century, there came to Paris a printer by the name of Estienne; a name which re-appears in Latin as Stephanus, and in English as Stephens. The diabolical mystery which hung over the origin of the typographical art, had long been dissipated. Dr. Faustus and his satanic adjutant were succeeded by a more practical generation, and the nobility looked down on the mechanical profession, which was at first reckoned among the black arts. Tradition says that Henri Estienne's family belonged to the old gentry of Provence, and that their pride received a severe shock from his determination to follow the printer's trade; but tradition is ever busy with baseless assertions, and we cannot pause to examine every myth which the history of literature presents. Henry had learned his trade of a German, and came to Paris in quest of fortune. He brought with him a fund of diligence and perseverance. One hundred and twenty works—no small number in those times of Italian supremacy—were the fruits of twenty years of labor; and the Provençal printer became the

VOL. IX—1

Ac. Emory Univ 5-4-52

crites, blasphemers, as many, not to say the majority of them, have been; and as their infidelity does not make them virtuous and holy while they are in this world, so it does not give them a tranquil and triumphant removal from it to a better. The lives and deaths of believers and unbelievers respectively originate, no doubt, in regard to the destiny decreed them by the great Arbiter of the fates of men: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

ART. V.

GOD'S METHOD OF SAVING THE WORLD.

By Rev. T. V. MOORE, D. D., Richmond, Va.

One of the most plausible objections to the divine origin of Christianity, is that which is derived from its limited diffusion. It is alleged that if this were God's only mode of saving the human race, the whole human race would have received the revelation of it, and it would not have been found in such narrow limits as we actually see it.

It might be a sufficient reply to this objection, that the principle involved in it proves too much. If the partial distribution of Christianity proves that it did not come from God, the partial distribution of other blessings must also prove that they did not come from God. But a moment's reflection will show us, that scarce a solitary blessing on earth is absolutely universal. Health, intellect, riches, learning, liberty, and the physical advantages of soil, climate and productions, are all distributed with a like inequality. The principle of this objection would not only prove that these blessings were not from God, but, when pushed to its legitimate consequences, prove that the universe itself was not from God, because it does not fill all possible space and contain all possible beings, and thus land us in sheer atheism.

If it be replied, that religion is a blessing, whose relation to eternal interests demands that it should rest on a different basis from other blessings, the objection will then recoil with fatal force on those who commonly urge it. If the want of universality is a valid objection to Christianity, much more is it to any system that is brought to supplant it; for where there is one man who has adopted any of these systems of Inf-

delity, there are ten thousand who have adopted Christianity. Since then there is no system that is universal, it follows that universality is not a necessary attribute in a system of religion that comes from God.

But whilst this may silence, it may not satisfy the objector. He may still ask, why was this allowed? why were not the means of salvation co-extensive with the persons to be saved? As Christians we are not bound to answer these queries, any more than the objector is bound to explain why an acknowledged gift of God has not been universal; and if we could see no reason for this procedure, we would still be chargeable with no logical failure in the defences of our faith. But if we can discover any reasons for such a constitution of things, our minds will at least repose in a more complete satisfaction upon the great salvation, and upon its gracious Giver. Let us then look more closely at these facts, and see whether such reasons may not appear.

It is an obvious principle of God's dealings with men, in both the material and the spiritual world, that they are not to be compelled to love and serve him against reason or will. He would have a reasonable and a willing service, and hence gives the amplest scope for the play of every human power. He will allow men to ruin both body and mind, rather than secure their preservation by the suspension or constraint of the voluntary powers, and hence always gives man scope for the trial of his own way that he may see the superior excellence of God's way. Thus it is in other departments of action, and thus we would naturally expect it should be in religion. If it be the design of revealed religion, as it actually declares its design, to demonstrate the evil of sin, so that all creatures shall willingly hate it, and the wisdom and holiness of God, so that they shall willingly love Him, then must be scope given to sinful man to show the exceeding sinfulness of sin, that the glory of God may stand out in radiant contrast. That this might be done, without any constraint of man's voluntary powers, Christianity must be revealed precisely as it has been. Had it been at once coeval and co-extensive with the human race, men would have denied its divine origin for exactly the opposite reason that they now urge against it, and perhaps with yet more show of reason. It would have been alleged that it was the natural product of man's unaided powers, and hence could have no more rightful claim of absolute authority over him than any other system that these powers might devise. This would have led men to reject its claims as a divinely authorized system, until it ceased to be universal, and became as we actually find it. If, to avoid this result, a constant succession of miracles were adopted, their very constancy would have destroyed their force and made them mere ordinary occurrences, and thus destroyed their power as proofs of a divine interposition. In any event, then, the

result must have been exactly as we find it, if religion is to be a reasonable and voluntary service, proving that here, as elsewhere, the so-called foolishness of God is wiser than man.

We are told often, from the same source that urges this objection, that the earth was not brought into existence by an instantaneous act of creation, but allowed to pass through long ages of pre-Adamic history before it was fitted for the residence of man; and that after it was thus fitted, vast tracts of it were left unsubdued, that man's energies might be developed in that subjugation. Now, if in the greater work of the new creation, long ages were allowed to elapse before the second Adam appeared on earth, and man's unaided powers even in their very decay and disintegration allowed to prepare a soil for the reception of this great interposition; and if, since the coming of that second head of the race, there are left still large tracts of territory unsubdued and unoccupied, that the energies of redeemed man may be vigorously developed; if man's unaided powers were allowed to develop their utter impotency before Christ came, and scope was left for their unconstrained activity afterwards, the new creation is in exact analogy with the old, and both are so arranged as to show that the creative and redemptive interpositions are not of man, but of God.

This is precisely the position, however, that is actually assumed by Christianity. When it was first proclaimed to the world, it was to the Jew a stumbling block, and to the Greek foolishness. It was opposed as an upstart novelty, and ridiculed as an illiterate superstition, coming as it did with none of the pomp of earthly splendor, and none of the pretension of earthly philosophy, it was hated by even such men as Tacitus, as an *exitiabilis superstitio*, and derided by such men as Lucian as a vulgar fanaticism. The early defenders of Christianity admitted the fact that she did not take her stand beside the philosophies, or the pomps of the world, or attempt to use their peculiar agencies. But this was not because she was beneath them, but because she was above them. A veiled angel from heaven, she needed not the millinery and upholstery of earth. A champion of the Lord of hosts, whose fearless trust was in Him, she needed not the armor of Saul. She pointed to the fact that God had given the amplest scope to human wisdom to demonstrate its ability to regenerate the world, and that it was only after its signal inability had been proved, that other method of God was revealed, which was "by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." The position assumed by Christianity was that which the experience of every merely human effort demonstrated, that man's religion was inadequate to his wants, and that the only scheme that could reach and supply those wants was, the preaching of Jesus Christ and him crucified.

It might be supposed, at the first blush, that this position would, at this late day, be conceded, and that it would not be necessary to contend for it, as Paul and Peter were compelled to do. But in this supposition we shall soon find ourselves mistaken. One of the latest and bitterest assaults on revealed religion is contained in a book, written mainly by Mr. Nott, of Mobile, and Mr. Gliddon, of mummy-unrolling memory, and called the "Types of Mankind." This huge mass of paper and pedantry, especially in Mr. Gliddon's portion of it, exhibits a venomous hostility to the Bible, that is very painful to one who loves its precious words, and that common courtesy might have required a gentleman to express in terms that, at least, were more decent. A single sentence will exhibit some of the *animus* of the book, and present the ground that infidelity has chosen herself in the contest she is now waging with Christianity: After a series of silly and pedantic criticisms on the English version of the Bible, and a bespattering, with mere fish-woman slang, "the forty-seven" as he continually calls them, and asserting that at the bare proposition to have an amended version, the Universities, Book-Concerns, and dissenting sects would feel a devout horror, "and that Exeter Hall shudders even at the thought, and Bible societies whine that the reign of Anti-Christ is come," he adds: "As positivists we lament not that our brief space of life will have been measured, long before a *new* English version may be 'authorized;' because, through the slow but unerring laws of human advancement in knowledge, by the time that *theologians* shall have accomplished their metaphysical translation and have awakened to the stern realities of the case, the development of science will have rendered any *new translation* altogether supererogatory among the educated, who are creating *new religions* for themselves."

Here then is the position taken by the infidelity that is at work around us, striving to overturn the religion revealed in the Bible. Men are creating "new religions" for themselves. We must say that in this promise, thus thrown out, there is an unnecessary liberality. One good religion will be enough for us, and if Mr. Gliddon will only give us one that is better than that of the Bible, we will thankfully receive it. It is true, that as a matter of taste we might prefer that it should be given us in better English and better manners than we find in the "Types of Mankind," but remembering the old maxim, *de gustibus*, we waive our preference, and are willing to be thankful for the new religion, however it may reach us. But it is, perhaps, not an impertinent curiosity in us to desire to know something of the complexion of these promised religions before we throw away our old one. An old fable warns us that we may lose a substantial reality in grasping at a shadow in the treacherous current beneath us, and we therefore have some desire to know

what will be the character of these new religions before we engage to drop the one we have. And it happens, rather fortunately for our purpose, that this work of creating new religions is not a new thing under the sun. Men have been engaged in it for the last four or five thousand years, and have had the amplest scope for the exercise of their powers. And although we will not say that Mr. Gliddon and his co-creators are not likely to do, what forty centuries of men have failed to do, yet we will say, that this fact warrants us to wait until we see these religions before we agree to accept them. If it is wise for a man sometimes to be cautious even in pronouncing on an unrolled mummy, it is surely not unwise to be circumspect about endorsing uncreated religions. Let us then look at the success of the efforts already made in this work of creating new religions, and comparing the created religion of man, with the uncreated religion of God, determine which is the better of the two, and whether it be wise to exchange the one for the other.

We are not to be understood as denying that God has furnished much knowledge of himself in the works of Nature. His "eternal power and God-head" have been embodied in the mighty hieroglyphics of visible nature, but man, in reading this mystic scroll by his own unaided wisdom, has sadly misinterpreted the record. Instead of deciphering these sublime revelations of the Creator, he translated them into senseless and often hideous jargon. Until God himself revealed the key, these inscriptions were but darkly guessed at by man. The Bible became the Rosetta stone of the material universe.

A very cursory glance at the religious history of the human race will prove that man's efforts at creating new religions from the indications of Nature have always ended in failure, and only tended to show the necessity of a religion authoritatively revealed from Heaven.

An English gentleman once sent some ploughs to India, that the natives might use them instead of the rude instruments with which they scratched the soil. The ploughs arrived, but instead of using them as they were intended, the poor wretches clung to their clumsy implements and set up the English ploughs on a shrine and worshipped them! Piti-able as this procedure of the poor Hindoo seems, it is but an illustration of the use that man has made of God's richest gifts. In the-wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God.

God spread out the dome of the sky and gemmed it with worlds, but man, instead of reading the great name that was syllabled there in stars, bowed down and worshiped the sun shining in his strength and the moon walking in her brightness. Had he paused here, his folly had been less palpable, for there is something wondrously grand in these heavenly symbols of the uncreated light and the almighty power. But he soon

turned away from these majestic objects, as if they were too serenely lofty to meet the grovelling degeneracy of his powers, and prostrated himself not only before corruptible man, but even before birds and four-footed beasts and creeping things. Egypt arose to a magnificence of civilization that infidelity seeks to turn against the Bible, and yet infidelity herself must confess that Egypt bowed in abject idolatry before the reptiles of the river and the roots of the soil, and cowered in dread before birds and crocodiles, onions and cats. Greece and Rome in the noon-tide of their splendid career; when the shout of their warriors and the song of their bards rang round the world; when philosophy, literature and art attained a faultless perfection that modern culture has been content merely to imitate; and when the very Titans of intellect were seeking to scale the dazzling boundaries of human thought, even Greece and Rome erected temples and altars to gods in heaven, to whom, had they been men on earth, they would have assigned the whipping-post and the dungeon; and found their highest notion of Divinity, in a thunder-clothed robber, an almighty murderer; and a divine prostitute a mere conclave of deified lusts.

But it may be alleged that these were times of ignorance, and that modern intellect has vindicated its ability to originate an efficient religion. That modern intellect has many truths unknown to ancient is undoubted, but it is somewhat remarkable that these possessions of modern intellect are only found in lands that possess the Bible, and that modern intellect in China, India, Africa, and Australia has no advantage in any respect over ancient intellect. But waiving this difficulty, we are willing to take all the discoveries of modern intellect with gratitude. We ask then for these discoveries, concerning the heavenly and divine. And here we are puzzled at the very out-set, who shall be her prophet? Shall it be Kant, or Schelling, or Fichte, or Hegel, or Jacobi, or the long line of Teutonic sages, each stretching farther into the mist, and agreeing with the other in but a single point, namely, that all the other philosophers are wrong? Or shall it be the infinite babble of France, from the grinning mockeries of Voltaire or the beastly sensualism of the Encyclopedists, to the wild dreams of Fourier and Proudhon, and the cold atheism of Comte? Or shall we listen to the dark sayings of English and American oracles, who give in solemn echo the sybilline utterances of the major prophets of the Continent, and strut the stage before us in the cast-off finery and tawdry theatricals of German and French philosophy? Shall it be Carlyle, or Newman, or MacKay, or Emerson, or Parker, or the coming man of whom they tell us? One tells us that there is a God, another that there is no God; one that God is the universe, another that there is no universe, all is idea;

one that God is in history, another that he has wound up the clock work of human affairs and left it to run of its own accord; whilst another asserts that there is no God but man, and that the Ego is the highest development of the Infinite Essence. Which shall we believe? One tells us that man has a soul, another that he is an animal electric machine that has, in some cases at least, the peculiarity of thinking; another that the soul is a more subtle sort of gas; whilst another, to escape all difficulty, avers stoutly that there is no soul at all, and the very notion only an exploded popular delusion. Others tell us that there is no doubt about the spiritual world, though the Bible account of it is all wrong. The spirits of the mighty dead are not gathered in a blood-washed throng around the throne above. Oh, no, this would be superstition. They are engaged in the sublime employment of tipping chairs and moving furniture, rapping out blundering guesses at the age of a man's grand-father or the number of his children, and skulking behind doors and beneath tables as obsequious accomplices to bring dollars and dimes into the pockets of travelling spinsters and vagabond show-men. Others descend from the regions of the spiritual to those of the temporal, and although their patent nostrums are very different, they agree in one point, that the Bible and the Church are the grand buttresses of all earthly abuses, and that the good time coming will never be here until they are destroyed. It is true there is some diversity of opinion about what shall be done after this feat is accomplished. One believes that the fear of hell is the grand evil of society, and that men will never be virtuous until they believe that they can sin without any fear of being punished. Another is confident that property and capital are the oppressors, and that men will never become enterprising until they know that labor and laziness will meet with the same reward, and that what one man works for any other man may enjoy. Another hints somewhat obliquely that perhaps marriage is the root of all evil, and that man would be elevated in his domestic life, by conforming his conjugal relations to the liberal arrangements of his humbler kindred of the stable and the sty. Another thinks that penal laws are the great obstacle, and that enterprising gentlemen will never restrain their expansive aspirations after the good things of this life that are beyond their reach, until we abolish the prison and the gallows, and substitute moral suasion, coaxing words, and honeyed sentiment, in place of these barbarous relics of the past. Another affirms that all the arrangements of society must be changed, from the skirt of a lady's dress up to the constitution of the United States, and instead of the Bible, the Church and the ministry, we must have tales about angelic Africans and cherubic vendors of hot corn, and women's right conventions, and mosaic societies of

masculine females and feminine males, and great gas-making anniversaries that are to illumine the world. In a word, to emancipate man from all the restraints of law, woman from all those of decency, childhood from all those of obedience; to check vice by removing all fear of punishment, and cherish industry by taking away all hope of reward; to destroy all sin by abolishing the ten commandments, and all error by burning the creed; to elevate man to a higher character by teaching him that his destiny is on a level with that of a dog, that God is only a gigantic phantom and man a developed brute, that life is but a game of chance and death an eternal sleep; these, oh, these are the sublime discoveries of modern intellect, when it has out-grown the wisdom of revelation.

Let these notions become the belief of a whole people, and what must be the result? Inevitable ruin. The present life is too narrow to furnish at once motives and restraints adjusted to the nature of man. The desire for mere earthly well-being may stimulate to intense activity, but there is no margin left for the inevitable facts that such an activity must only multiply. Losses, failures, and sorrows will advance with this activity, and if this life is all that we expect, there is no compensation for these evils. Every loss or disappointment is an absolute diminution of the sum total of possible bliss, whose bitterness is aggravated by the treacherous uncertainty of life. Hence the good things of life will be clutched at with the famished eagerness of a soul that knows nothing better, and must make the most of its only opportunities. There is no reserve of power to sustain in the reverses of life, no gleams of brighter hours to gild the gloom of present sorrow, no hope of future blessedness to compensate for present privation. The many who have drawn blanks in the lottery of life will be ready for any wild scheme of plunder that may promise a change, which cannot at least be for the worse, for they cannot expect to sink lower in this life, and they have no fear of any life to come. Must it not be so? Destroy our belief in the Bible, and what certainty have we of any thing unseen or eternal? If this book be no utterance of a God, where can there be any more reliable? Remove all fear of a future judgment and an almighty judge, and what motive can the masses have to restrain them from the rioting of every passion? Why should they keep back from the riches, the beauty and the elegance that lie so temptingly before their hungry lips and gloating eyes, when they may escape or defy all punishment in this life, and believe that there is none in the life to come? Unchain the tiger, in the human heart, that even now, with all the restraints of revealed wrath, is so terrific in its ravening, and what must be the result? Appetite must become more lawless, and passion more savage; all rights of person, pro-

erty and reputation must be lost in the fierce strugglings of ferocious natures for indulgence; all the charities and honesties of life must be crushed in the greedy scramble for success; all the nobler elements of natural life must disappear, and instead must unfold the mongrel attributes of the demon and the beast, and like that carnival of hell that infidelity proclaimed in France, there must be a horrid festival of fiends, whose banquet-board should smoke with the quivering flesh and streaming blood of a butchered people. Thus it must ever be, and thus it has ever been. Whenever man has lost all faith in God, he has lost all faith in himself, and whenever the bow of hope has ceased to arch the future, the lurid tempest has begun to gather around the present until all was wrapped in its sheetings of fire and blood. Thus was it in ancient nations, which the faint gleams of the unseen that tradition had left in the distortions of heathenism, and thus was it in latter times when frenzied France uncapped the crater of the pit, and when the red republicanism of 1848 revealed the startling fact, that beneath the olive and the vine there was still boiling the pent-up fire of this red volcano.

Thus has it been in regard to this life; but if we extend our thoughts to the life to come, the impotence of man's religion becomes unspeakably more apparent. When a sense of sin begins to come over the soul; when conscience, like some startled watcher, begins to point to the quick flashings of that coming storm that is gathering around us, we ask ourselves how shall we escape from this wrath to come? And even if all fears of a burning lake and an undying worm were shown to be fancies, how shall we quench that hell of lust and passion that is burning within, itself a hotter Gehenna than the seven times heated furnace? It may tell us of sin, but it can tell us nothing of pardon, or purity; nothing of cooling fountains that shall bathe the burning brow of guilt, nor soothe the throbbing heart of anguish, with a sweet sense of forgiven sin, of satisfied justice, and of accepted atonement. In the geography of man's religion there stands a Sinai, but no Calvary; a Gologtha, but no Gethsemane; a grave, but no cross; a weary wilderness, but no smiling Canaan; a dark and lonely river of death, but no river of water of life with its fringing palms and its crystal stream outgushing from the throne of God and the Lamb. And so, when we stand at the grave that has closed on the loved and lost, and ask this religion, shall we meet our loved ones again? Oh, are we parted forever? It is dumb. It has "no blissful hope, no soothing thought of parted friends in heaven." It may still the conscience of the reveller at the banquet of guilt, but it cannot bind up the broken heart in the house of mourning; it may comfort a man in his sin, but it can never comfort him in his sorrow. And then, when we stand on the brink of the dark-rolling

river, and ask our guide whither am I going? Whither shall I be swept in the rayless rush of these fearful waters? Is there any smiling shore, any beckoning welcome beyond this awful tide? Alas, when we turn to receive a reply, our guide has vanished, and we are left in lonely and shivering affright to make this fearful plunge in the dark, and find out for ourselves what that is which our guide has been forced to confess it knows only to be a great Perhaps; fulfilling the awful warning that they who reject the light that God has provided and compass themselves with sparks of their own kindling, shall have it at God's hand to lie down at last in darkness and woe. Such is man's method of dealing with the great problem of human sin and human sorrow.

We, therefore, enquire what is God's method of saving the world? We reply in the words of Paul, it is "by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." In other words, the preaching of the gospel is God's method of saving the human race. As the divine and the human were united in the Author of the Gospel, so in its promulgation God has joined a divine word with a human agency in declaring it. Had man devised this scheme of salvation, it would have been entrusted to far different agents of execution. Instead of men, he would perhaps have sent angels, whose mien of majesty and words of fire would have startled the most sluggish, and daunted the most daring in sin; or had men been chosen, it would have been the wise, the rich, or the mighty of earth, whose overwhelming greatness would have disarmed all possible opposition. Had this been done, the glory of the work would have been ascribed to the creature rather than the Creator, and the divine signature now visible upon it, would have been wanting; and thus its power, as a system from God, would have been weakened, if not destroyed. Moreover, the same corruptions must have crept into this repository of earthly splendor that has crept into every other, by the temptations they afford to cupidity and ambition. The experience of the Church, whenever she has been allied with human power and decked with human pomp, as in the Papacy, and indeed in every civil establishment of religion, proves that in not adopting this mode of saving the world, the so deemed foolishness of God is wiser than man. Man's systems of reform always began at the upper portions of society and attempted to work downwards, like the man who would begin to build his house at the roof instead of the foundation, or cultivate his tree at the branches instead of the root, and hence his efforts were always failures. God's method was to begin at the foundation and the root, and cause the living temple and the living vine to grow upward in all their strong and compact union with the rock of ages and the root of Jesse.

God's method was to send his own Son in the flesh, to obey, to suffer, and to die; to wander and weep and bleed; to bear the sins and sorrows of man; to be stricken, smitten and afflicted; to appear not as the throned king of kings, but as the lowly man of Nazareth; to assume, not the robe of royalty, but the garb of a servant; to be despised, rejected, maligned and murdered, that he might taste the very dregs of the cup that sin had mingled, and bear the guilt of a world. And when this atoning work was complete, he sent forth as its herald, not the warrior in his burnished steel, or the philosopher with his subtle dialectics; or the statesman with his crafty diplomacy; but the fisherman of Galilee, the peasant of Judea, and the tent-maker of Tarsus; simple, poor and unknown men, with no pomp of power, no parade of learning, and no bribes of wealth, with nothing but the story of Jesus Christ and him crucified. Can we wonder that the Jew, who saw his vaulting hopes of a Messiah thus so seemingly caricatured; the Greek, who found his philosophy so rudely set aside; and the Roman who met so fearless a challenge of his supremacy, should all unite to crush this handful of presumptuous fanatics, who assailed thus all that was hoary in religion, lofty in learning and splendid in power; to assert the claims of our Jesus who was dead, and who they said was alive? Were the odds ever so fearfully against a band of struggling men? Was there ever a case in which human calculation would more certainly have predicted defeat? Ah! if there had been nothing at work higher than human agencies, this movement must soon have been crushed, and we left to gather its history from the dull dreams of the Talmudists, the sneers of Tacitus, Juvenal and Pliny, or the more ribald mockeries of Lucian, Celsus and Porphyry. But the weakness of God was stronger than men, and soon the paganism of Rome, the dialectics of Greece, and the legalism of Judea, all gave way before the burning words of these earnest men, and in a few years this despised and hated system was seated on the throne of the Caesars. And by what agency was a result so stupendous brought about? Not by the sword of power, for that was red with the blood of Christians. Not by the force of human learning, for that was too busy with its laborious trifles to attend to religion. Not by any human craft, or human potency, or the usual means of human success, was this accomplished by its Great Author, but by "the foolishness of preaching." Not the warrior, nor the monarch, nor the sage, but the preacher was the conqueror of the world, or rather "it pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe."

And since that time the history of Christianity has been the history of its preaching. As soon as its preachers became priests, and its pul-

pits altars, the long dark night of the Middle Ages descended upon the Church, and she fell asleep for a thousand years. And though there were still faithful witnesses of the truth that fed the flame in the sanctuary, and Elijah-like were hid in the clefts of the rocks, it was only when the voice of the preacher was heard, whether among the rocky vales of the Piedmont, or in the yet living pulpits of Italy. And when this long, deep slumber was to be broken, it was again by the voice of the preacher that the work was done. The unfettered pulpits of the Reformation proclaimed a free salvation, such as Paul and Peter preached, and the throbbing pulses of life, in half the Christian world, gave testimony to the truth, that it was still by "the foolishness of preaching" that God would save them that believe. Nor was this influence transient. For many a long year did Germany feel the pulses of Luther's mighty heart, and thrill with the music of Melancthon's silver tongue. The lofty spirit of Calvin was breathed into the hardy sons of Switzerland, and his dauntless words that echoed along the deep gorges of the Alps, made the Swiss churches the seed plots of freedom to the world. The glens and crags of Scotland are still ringing with the fearless words of Knox and Melville, Gillespie and Henderson, Cameron and Erskine, Thomson and Chalmers, and many a martyr spirit who sacrificed all that is dear in life, and sometimes life itself, that the pure evangel should be proclaimed to the children of the Covenant. And in England, the names of Latimer and Ridley, Howe and Baxter, Watts and Doddridge, Wesley and Whitfield, stand as flood marks of the respective eras of their country's religious history. And in our own favored land, the honored names of Edwards and Davies, Mason and Griffin, Asbury and Coke, with many others among the dead, and still other names among the honored living, not yet hallowed by death, present in the results of their labors the results of the highest reach of influence to which Christianity has reached. Indeed, the history of Christianity in any country is, to a great extent, the history of its pulpit. As is the preacher, so will be usually the people, as to the average result of their Christian activity and effort. Nor is there anything in this that conflicts with the fact that all Christian attainments are from God. For as the waters of a stream, though they descend at first from the clouds of heaven, yet do not rise higher than their fountain on earth; so the current of a nation's religious life, though it descends from God above, as to its primal origin, will yet usually rise no higher than its earthly sources below.

That blessings of the richest nature have gathered around the lands in which Christianity has been planted, is a fact that the blindest must perceive. That peace and plenty, law and order, liberty and energy,

prosperity and power, are found flourishing in Christian Europe and America, to an extent that places them in lofty contrast with anti-Christian Asia and Africa, is obvious to the most distorted prejudice. But if we will examine the distribution of these blessings they will be found to be in the exact proportion in which we find an unmuzzled pulpit and a free gospel. In the enjoyment of all the elements of a vigorous Christian civilization, we find a steady gradation from where the hissing priesthood mutter their mummeries and mumble their masses in Italy, Austria, Spain and France, up to where a free pulpit proclaims a pure gospel to the people of Britain and America. Hence, group as we will, the fruits of Christianity in the world tell us how wondrously she has blessed it, how the breathings of Eden have fanned her footsteps, and how sweetly her hallowed influence has gone into every department of human life; yet in all this brilliant unparalleled picture we have but accumulated one magnificent and unanswerable illustration of the truth announced by Paul to the wisdom-worshipping Greeks of Corinth, that "when in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."

The reason of this fact is found, not in anything personal in the character of the preachers, but in the nature of the message they are sent to deliver. There is something in the glorious gospel of the blessed God that has "the promise of the life that now is, as well as that of the life that is to come." Let this gospel be found in the hearts and homes of a people, and that people will be prosperous and happy. Let the homes of a people be such as the gospel is designed to make them; let each one present a quiet refuge, where the sweet prattle of childhood and the gentle smile of womanhood are ever ready to welcome the husband and father from the toils of the day; let the kindly charities of loving hearts continue to wreath, amid the hard realities of outer life, a sheltering fold within, where the jaded spirit may forget the tossings of an ever-heaving present in the hopes of an endless future; let the holy names of mother, wife and daughter, in the tenderness, purity and loveliness of a Bible piety, unite to grace the household hearth and to gild the household altar; let the light of the sacred Sabbath come in alike at the casements of cottage and palace, to brighten the rough realities of weekly toil with a sunny calm that tells at once of the Paradise that is past, and of the Paradise that is to come; let the sound of the church-going bell, and the solemn voice of hymns, and the earnest pleadings of the man of God, be allowed to lift the weary heart away from the harassing disquietudes of the present to "the rest that remaineth for

the people of God," and the earthly interests of such a nation are safe. Whilst the people of other lands seek their enjoyment in noisy excitements, they find theirs in the tranquil scenes of home and the high teachings of the Sabbath, in which the character acquires a deeper thoughtfulness and a firmer strength. Disappointments and losses may occur, but when the heritage is in heaven, the evils of earth are less heavily felt, for they leave untouched the greatest possession. Sorrow in its saddest form may come, and life be wrapped in unutterable gloom, but the stricken pilgrim, instead of abandoning himself to despair, but grasps his palmer staff with a firmer hold, and girds his robe with a steadier heart, and presses on with a more untiring step to that home where sorrow is unknown forever. It needs not the penalty of human laws to deter him from sin, for there rises ever to his eye the awful things of eternity, the great white throne, the gathering of the dead, the stern scrutiny of the day of doom, and the sentence that shall sweep the ungodly away in wrath forever. And there needs not the rewards of human law to keep him in the path of right, for there gleam ever to his eye of faith the glittering spires, the flashing gates, the waving trees and the crystal waters of "that city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." And can a people with such a faith as this, become the dupes of the demagogue, or the victims of the conqueror? Can they ever perish by the causes that have been fatal to the nations of the past? It is impossible. Reason and history unite in declaring, it is impossible.

Then we claim that, measured by this standard of mere earthly things, a pure gospel and a free pulpit are the best blessings that can be given to any people. As an agency in the prevention of crime, in fostering habits of temperance, industry, honesty, and peace, and thus increasing at once the wealth of a country, and that which wealth cannot buy, the happiness of its homes, and as a great educational institute which trains men to be good members of society and of the family, by the only process, and supported by the only motives that can be efficient on the masses, it is at once the cheapest and the best conservator of a nation's welfare. The pulpit is cheaper than the prison; the Church and the Sabbath school less costly than the police and the standing army that would otherwise be needed to prevent the lawless passions of one class in society from bursting out against another. Even with the niggard allowance of men and means that has been granted to her, she has demonstrated that a free gospel and a free government, a pure pulpit and a prosperous people, are always found side by side, and that the latter can never have a permanent existence without the former. Men may devise paper constitutions and enact paper laws, philosophers may dream

theories, and statesmen may elaborate diplomacies, but these are only the outside clothing, or at best the untasted food of the body politic. The hidden springs of a nation's life lie all too deep for such superficial agencies as these in the throbbing heart and the tingling nerves that can be reached only by those spiritual potencies that are employed by the gospel. Hence, in the sense of mere earthly prosperity, and deliverance from mere earthly ruin, it is true that "a preached gospel is God's method of saving the world."

We have dwelt the longer on this earthly aspect of the efficacy of the gospel of God, because when it is demonstrated in what is seen and present, we may the more readily receive its declarations of efficacy in the unseen future. The same hand that has formed the one, has formed the other, and that whose potency is proved in the one, has the highest claim to be trusted in the other. The man who rejects these claims in regard to the unseen, after its demonstrated efficacy in the seen, rejects all the force of analogy, and proves that his reasons for this rejection are drawn, not from the logic of a good mind, but from the more potent logic of a bad heart.

And yet, in looking at this aspect of it, we have been but lingering about the threshold of a temple whose foundation is God, and whose limits are eternity. These gleams of earthly brightness are but the dawning of a progress that shall unfold its radiant glory, when the sun has gone out, and the stars grown weary of shining and the heavens passed away like a burning scroll, and the shifting clouds of time all vanished from before the unsetting sky of eternity. Oh, it is in looking at these results of this gospel, then, that we see its real sweep, and have some faint conception of the meaning of the word SALVATION. When we remember that he, who would otherwise have been hurried into eternity a lonely, shivering, shrieking thing, to learn by terrific experience how fearful a thing it was to fall into the hands of the living God, may stand among the spirits of the just made perfect; that he, who would otherwise have been a gnashing, blaspheming fiend, may by believing this gospel rise to take rank with angels, and walk in light beneath the arching domes, and along the glittering streets of the city of our God; that he, whose tongue had uttered words of sin on earth, and might have been uttering wails of sorrow in hell, may by this gospel ascend to join the "ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands" from whom the anthem of Moses and the Lamb rolls like the voice of many waters; that he, who was a weary and weeping pilgrim in this land of tears through the brief day of life, may, through a long, bright, unfading eternity, wander along those plains of light that stretch away in their beauty across the land that is afar off; oh, it is when we remember such facts as these that

we begin to see the real sweep of this mighty argument, and to look down into the unfathomable depths of that mercy, that has so ordered it, that when in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God not to allow man to perish in his self-acquired folly, but rather by the so-called "foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."

ART. VI.

WESLEYAN METHODISM IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

[CONCLUDED.]

By HUMPHRY SANDWITH, M. D.

(From the *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, for August, 1854.)

But in spite of all these proofs of the value of Wesleyan Methodism, and of its adaptation to the wants of the age, and the existing phases of society, its speedy decline has been predicted by certain Dissenters of the Congregational school, by the Tractarians, and by those who call themselves "Wesleyan Reformers." We have a few words to say to each of these parties.

1. Certain Dissenters, whose prepossessions in favor of Congregationalism lead them to conclude the nature of *that* system to be such that "its ripeness must come with the world's ripeness," and that "the manhood of the species will be seen in that day, and with it the putting away of childish things," naturally enough predict a short career to Methodism, as too friendly to establishments, and therefore doomed to perish in common with "the thousand inventions which human imbecility has worshiped." Such seems to be the sober judgment of Dr. Vaughan, who says that "it may be safely predicted, that the *system will not last*, but, like every other *originating less in permanent principles than in passing circumstances*, will fall, in its turn, by the same influences which have favored its existence." He then illustrates the prediction by the successive miscarriages of the disciples of St. Benedict, St. Francis, and Ignatius Loyola. He seeks, indeed, to soften the harshness of so unwelcome a parallelism, by asserting that "the only comparison intended is that of re-