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INFLUENCE OF RELIGION  
UPON HEALTH

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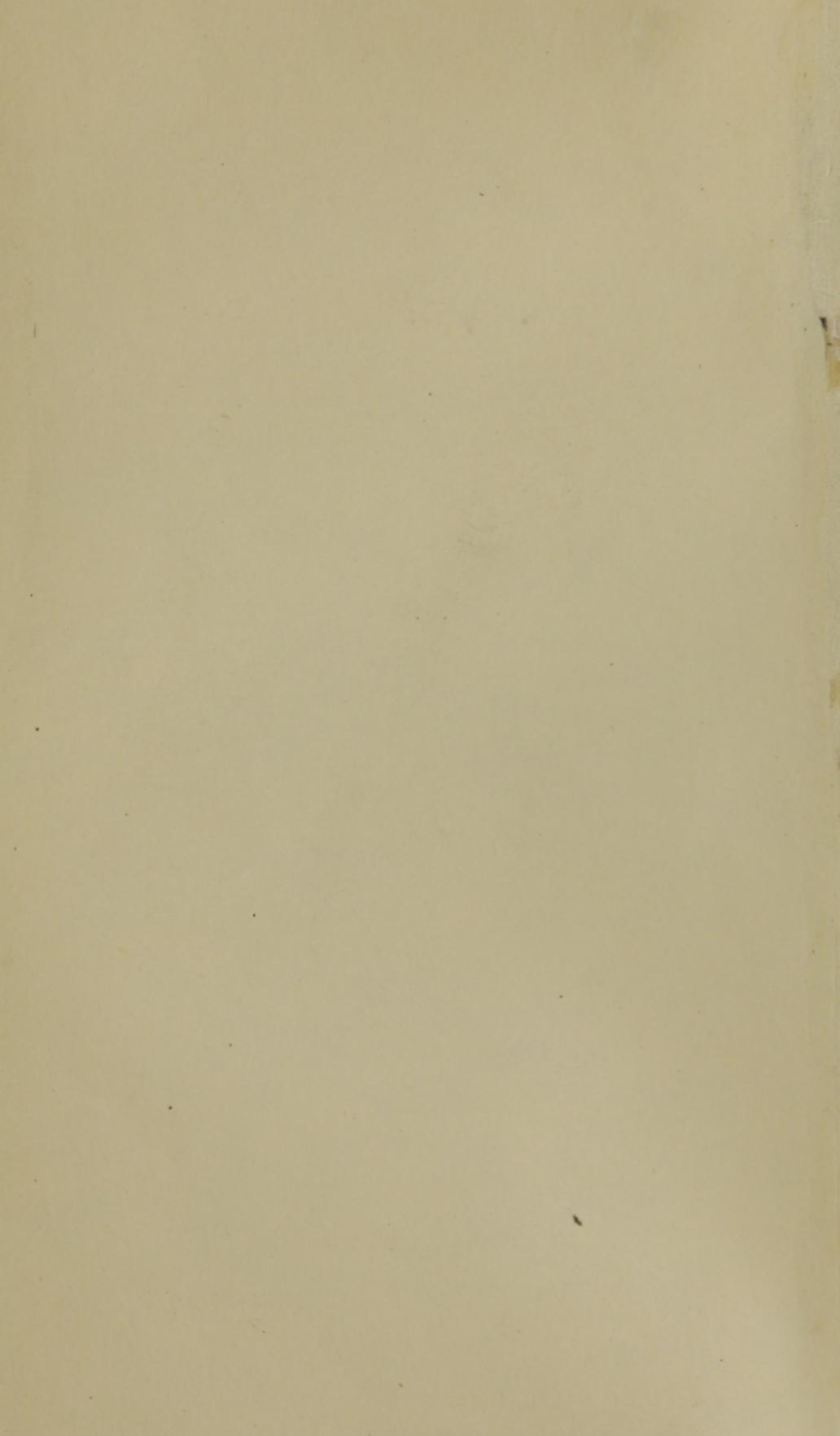
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OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

INFLUENCE OF RELIGION

UPON THE

HEALTH

AND

PHYSICAL WELFARE OF MANKIND.

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BY AMARIAH BRIGHAM, M. D.

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## PREFACE.

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The following work treats of an important and very extensive subject. A subject that requires, for its full and proper elucidation, far more learning than the author possesses, and much more time than he can spare from the duties of his profession.

Convinced, however, that such a work might be at this time, of practical utility to his countrymen, and not knowing of any upon the subject, he has been induced to undertake it. But he is fully aware of the incompleteness of his performance, though he trusts it will be to some extent useful ; and hopes it may serve to awaken attention to the subjects he has noticed, and encourage others of more leisure and ability to prosecute the same inquiries.

The first portion of the work, treats of past times, and of religions, and forms of religious worship, that have long since passed from civilized communities.

Some allusion to them, however, seemed proper, especially to show that religious customs and institutions are changeable and progressive, and have constantly improved and been rendered more useful to mankind, as civilization and knowledge have increased.

Other portions of the work are devoted to considerations arising from some of the forms of Christian worship. In remarking upon these, the author at first, may, be accused of advancing very unscriptural opinions. But he begs his readers, before coming to any conclusion, to give the whole work an unprejudiced perusal, and also to study the New Testament upon the subjects alluded to, free from all pre-conceived opinions, as if it was a work but just issued from the press—to study it with all the aids which history and science will afford them, and above all, to study it with as sincere and ardent desire to find the exact truth, as to find

the author wrong, and their former views confirmed.

The writer is aware that he has treated some long established opinions with great freedom, but he has endeavored to do so with candor and honesty. Entertaining a profound respect for the religious sentiment, notwithstanding the absurd forms, ceremonies and customs with which it has been connected, he hopes to render it more productive of good, by exhibiting the evils which some of these ceremonies and customs have caused mankind, and which will continue to afflict them, unless they are abandoned.

From the slight view given in this work, of different religions, the reader may see the vast superiority of that of Christ, even in promoting the physical welfare of mankind; though he will also see that its incomparable purity has often been marred, and its spirit entirely misapprehended, by the ignorance of some, and the ambition of others.

In giving this book to the public, the author indulges the hope, that it will have some influ-

ence in restoring the worship of Christians to that calm, simple and pure manner, recommended by our Saviour, and thus prove serviceable to the cause of rational and scriptural piety; while at the same time it tends to suppress all fanatical conduct, inimical to the religion of Christ, and injurious to the health and physical advancement of mankind.

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## INTRODUCTION.

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The *Religious Sentiment* appears to be innate in man. It forms a part of his nature as truly as benevolence, or attachment; and like all our sentiments, it is stronger in some individuals than in others. Though all other living beings are strangers to it, man has in all ages exhibited it. No race of human beings have been known who had not a religion and some form of religious worship. The proof of this assertion is furnished by historians of the past, and by modern travellers.—“No nation is to be found,” says Seneca, “so utterly destitute of law and morals as not to believe in gods of some kind or other.” The savage tribes, the barbarian hordes, nations that are but slightly advanced in social life, and those who languish in the decrepitude of civilization, all exhibit the power of this indestructible sentiment.”\*

This religious sentiment is not only innate, but it is one of the most powerful, if not actually the most so of our nature. It triumphs over all interests, and sways and rules mankind in all ages. This is also evident from history. It has impelled men and women, the

\*Benjamin Constant, *De la Religion, considerée dans sa source, ses formes et ses développements*. Vol. v. Paris, 1826. A very instructive and eloquent work, which I hope the reader will consult.

aged and the young, the savage and the civilized, to sacrifice themselves, their friends, offspring and dearest kindred, and driven nations into the most cruel and destructive wars the world has ever witnessed. It has caused people to forsake their families, their homes and country, and to exile themselves in the wilderness, or among the most savage tribes. In all ages this sentiment has led men to sacrifice their property, and to devote their time and abilities exclusively to its requirements.

This universal sentiment continually impels men to the adoration of invisible and superior powers, and to discover methods of communicating with them; to appease their anger; to seek their forgiveness, and to obtain their aid and blessing.

Hence has arisen religious worship; and the diversity of its forms, which the religious history of our race exhibits to us, and hence the innumerable objects of adoration. To use the words of the illustrious Gall,—“Men adore every thing; fire, water, thunder, lightning, meteors, grasshoppers, crickets. The Mexicans worshipped Vitzliputzli the god of war, and Tescaliputza the god of penitence. The negroes and savages of America profess the worship of the Fetish gods, which erects animals, and inanimate beings the most absurd, into deities. The streaked serpent is the natural divinity of the people of Juidah. Several American nations, like the Egyptians, make gods of the crocodile; or, like the Philistines, of the fish of the sea. In the peninsula of Yucatan, children are placed under the protection of some animal, chosen at random, which thenceforth becomes their tutelary god. The Samoiedes and Laplanders worship several kinds of animals and stones.

which they annoint ; as of old the Syrians adored the stones called *Boëtiles*, and as even now some Americans do their conical stones. The ancient Arabians took a square stone for their divinity ; and the god *Casius* of the Romans, called *Jupiter Petræus* by Cicero, was a round stone cut in the middle." "The ancient Germans made gods of bushy trees, fountains, and lakes ; they worshipped, as still the Laplanders do, certain shapeless trunks, which they conceived to resemble divinity. The Franks paid adoration to the woods, waters, birds, and beasts. Those primitive modes of worship, which prevailed among the Egyptians and Germans, are found, at a later period, among the people of Greece ; and it is impossible not to be struck with the conformity. Shapeless trunks were the first gods of the Greeks. The *Venus of Paphos* was a white pyramid ; the *Diana of the island of Eubœa* an unwrought piece of wood ; the *Thespian Juno* a trunk of a tree ; the *Pallas and Ceres of Athens* a simple stake, not stript ; the *Matuta of the Phrygians* was a black stone, with irregular angles, which they said fell from heaven at *Pessinuntum*, and which afterwards was carried to Rome with great respect. Men have had, besides these absurd national divinities, various private objects of worship, from which they expected individual and special protection. Such were the gods of *Laban*, and the household gods of the Romans. In the kingdom of *Issini*, one chose for his *Fetish* a piece of wood ; another, the teeth of a dog, a tiger, or an elephant. The seas were peopled with *Tritons*, *Nereids*, and divinities of different kinds ;—the plains with *Nymphs* and *Fauns* ;—the forests with *Dryads* and *Hamadryads*. Every rivulet, fountain, village, and city, had its divinity. All agreed

in thinking, that these divinities exacted honors,—that they were easily irritated, but appeased by bloody sacrifices. Their barbarism was every where carried the length of immolating even human victims to them. Add to all this the adoration of trees; the idols of the Chinese; the palladium of the Trojans; the sacred shield of the Romans; the universal confidence which men have had in talismans and amulets; in divinations, dreams, and oracles; in the casual encountering of different objects, such as a dead body or a cat; in the cry of night-birds; in the flight of birds; in penitences and mortifications of every kind.”

To receive, admire and appreciate a pure and spiritual religion, cannot reasonably be expected of savages and barbarians. They can only comprehend, and perhaps I may truly say, they can be benefitted only by gross forms of religion, and such as powerfully strike the senses.

Thus we find that religious worship has been progressive, and has become more pure and spiritual as mankind have progressed in knowledge. The religion of the Hebrews was such as was adapted to their intelligence, and for a time was undoubtedly the best for them. But it is exceedingly inferior to that given by Christ. As the apostle Paul taught the Galatians, it was not the best for mankind at the period of Christ. It was not sufficiently pure, spiritual and ennobling, and therefore Christianity was substituted for the law or religion of Moses.\*

This superiority of Christianity is evident from a slight examination of the Bible. “The Old and New Testament,” says Spurzheim, “attribute very different

\*Hug's Introduction to the writings of the New Testament, vol. 2.

qualities to the Supreme Being,—the God of Israel was jealous, revengeful and terrible, a God of war ; the God of the Christians on the contrary is love, benevolence and charity.” So is the morality of the New Testament far more pure and elevated than that of the Old. The conduct of the patriarchs and the followers of Christ is strikingly dissimilar. We find conduct attributed to the patriarchs, and mentioned in the Old Testament without reproach, which would now, not only drive the person guilty of such from all civilized society, but would be severely punished by the laws of all Christian countries. On this subject, Milman observes, “The ancestors of the Jews were not beyond their age or country in acquirements in knowledge, or even in morals. They were polygamists, and acquired the virtues and vices of each state of society through which they passed. In Abraham we do not find that nice and lofty sense of veracity which distinguished a state of society where the point of honor has acquired great influence.”\*

They were, to be sure, a people highly favored of the Lord, and were perhaps superior in many respects to the nations around them ; but it is evident to all, who examine their history with the love of truth and justice, that they were not a people of high moral endowments, and no individuals among them, of whom we have any account, can properly be referred to, as examples worthy of all imitation.

In connexion with this subject, the Edinburgh Review remarks,—“We protest against the practice so injurious to Christianity, of treating the Old and New Testament as concurrent schemes of Divine government, and as rules of similar cast or equal authority for

\* History of the Jews.

the conduct and expectations of human life,—the system of divine government described by the Jewish historians is scarcely less alien from that of Christianity than the system displayed by the heathen poets.” But this, the religion of the Hebrews, having served its time, “Christ appeared; the career of paganism was checked; the fate of Judaism was sealed. A character and a religion was placed before the eyes of men hitherto inconceivable in the beauty and philanthropy of their nature.”\* Christ announced to mankind, at the proper time, a religion calculated to elevate and strengthen the moral powers of men and give them dominion over the sensual. To this spiritual nature of Christianity the Apostle Paul often alludes, and represents the christian life, as one continual struggle of the spirit against the flesh; of the moral powers of man against his passions and appetites. I am aware that the word spirit is used in different senses in the New Testament; but I believe great misapprehension prevails among many as to its meaning, in a considerable number of passages. It appears to be often used merely to designate this spiritual nature of the Christian Religion, or its tendency to strengthen and exercise the spirit,—the *mind* of man,—his moral powers, which hitherto had been too much under the control of his sensual propensities.

St. Paul says, “I delight in the law of God after the *inward* man; but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my *mind*. With the *mind* I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.”

So in the phrase “fruits of the spirit,”—many suppose by the spirit here is meant something supernatu-

\*Howitt.

ral,—some gift, or new faculty, as it were, added to the nature of man, and imparted to him at a particular moment of his life. But this I apprehend is incorrect. By “fruits of the spirit,” I think nothing more is meant, than the *fruits* or natural *results* of the exercise of the moral and intellectual powers of man. The works of the flesh, are the *fruits* of the indulgence of the sensual propensities, uncontrolled by the moral powers,—“fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulation, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings.” And the “fruits of the Spirit,” are the results of the exercise of the inherent moral powers of man;—“love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, faith, meekness, temperance.” These qualities were not unknown in the world previous to the time of Christ, and therefore are not the fruit of any sudden or supernatural gift to man. If they had not been manifested before, the terms would have been unknown and required explanation.

Neither is it necessary in order to manifest such *fruits* that any new power should be imparted to men;—forsaking the indulgence of bad passions and sensual gratifications, adultery, drunkenness, &c. and becoming gentle, meek and temperate, does not require it. “God, in the moral government of the world, never does in an extraordinary way, that which can be equally effected in an ordinary way.”\* Who has not seen the lascivious man, the drunkard, the reveller, become chaste and temperate by the exertion of his own moral powers.

To be sure to effect this, requires a certain development or cultivation of our moral and intellectual powers. Preach temperance and the government of the animal

\* Bishop Warburton.

passions to savage tribes, and what would be the result? Not much more gratifying than if you preached to brutes. But educate them, call forth and strengthen by exercise the moral powers inherent in their nature, and then they will hearken to your instruction,—many will strive to obey you, and some will succeed.

Hence all great reforms in the moral world are not the result of the sudden efforts of one or more leaders,—but are the result of long and previous instruction of the mass of the people. Luther could not have succeeded in the century previous to his time, and the friends of the *temperance cause*, as it is called in this country, would have toiled in vain half a century before the present age. Now, their success is the result, not wholly of their labors as some suppose, but of the improved state of society.

These remarks will not be without use, if they induce any to look for improvement of the moral condition of mankind, not to any extraneous source,—to no new manifestation from on high, but to the developement and exercise of the powers and faculties which they already possess.

By successive reformations and by slow progress, mankind have improved in knowledge, morality and religious worship. This is not only true of the Jewish and Christian religion, but all religions have been modified in their forms and improved. Thus Bouddhisme has been to Brahmanisme in India, what Protestantism has been to the Roman Catholic Religion in Europe. It rendered Brahmanisme less intolerant and cruel, and had a salutary influence upon the morals of the inhabitants of Central Asia. So of the Mahometan Religion. This religion is now one of the most defective;—it has

served its time, and become stationary and useless. But it has been beneficial to mankind. It greatly improved the ferocious Arabs, who previous to Mahomet were but little above the brute creation. They were robbers and assassins without remorse of conscience. They considered women as property, and sold them for slaves, and even buried their daughters alive. These customs were abolished by the Prophet.

From these hints it is evident that modes of religious worship are continually and necessarily changing. Sometimes they linger behind the intelligence and morality of the people, and then like those of the Romish Church previous to the reformation, they become useless or injurious. At other times, especially in times of excitement on religious subjects, and in free, democratic countries, they become fanatical, and often licentious, and call for suppression. In all ages, therefore, reason, calm and enlightened, should guide us upon these subjects. Instead of submitting to the guidance of interested Popes or Priests, or to the unenlightened *spirit* generated in times of great religious fervor, respecting the best modes of worship, or the correct interpretation of the Gospel of Christ, we should seek that of reason aided by the lights of history and science. This appears conformable to the teachings of Christ. He imposed no forms of religious worship on men,—he gave no creed for all to embrace,—he did not seek for unity of forms of worship, but he sought to establish uniform morality. On this subject I have seen nothing better than the following from a late writer.

“It is not a vain idea, the establishment of an universal religion ; for religion is not a special form of worship, a particular dogma ; it is the sincere love of God and

man. If all creeds become pure by the adoption of this principle, the world adopts Jesus; Jesus, who did not come to invite mankind in all points to one creed, but to make known to them one God. "I will have mercy and not sacrifice," says the Scripture. Whoever, therefore, loves God as a father, and his fellow-man as a brother; whoever can bring his heart to bless his persecutor, and to be reconciled to his enemy; be he a follower of Mohammed, may justly call himself the disciple of Jesus. It is in this way that the Gospel is called to civilize the world. It will soften the hearts of men, and demolish their temples of stone; it will build up new opinions among nations, not violently destroy their present creeds. No sooner does its morality enter into the hearts of the barbarians, than they abolish, of their own accord, polygamy, the mutilation of the body, the usage of castes, slavery, tyranny, which is the contempt of man: and fanaticism, which is the ignorance of God. These abominations once gone, what stands before the heathen idols in the individual? What but a Christian?"\*

Hence we see that wherever the Christian Religion has been received, the sensual propensities have gradually yielded to the sovereignty of the moral and intellectual powers. This is evident by comparing society now, and at the time of Christ. It is evident from the constant denunciation of sensual vices by Christ and his Apostles: vices that cannot now be deemed so general and conspicuous as they must have been then. It is evident from an examination of subsequent history, especially of ecclesiastical history, minutely pursued. The

\*Aime Martin, De l'Education des Meres.

history of the churches in this country, the expulsion of members in former times for lasciviousness, shows us that the sensual propensities were then less under control than at present. Thus "Christianity has been upon the earth the most powerful promoter of moral progress, because it has detached the mind from the thralldom of the senses, and the heart from the bonds of the passions, without misconceiving the conditions and the exigences of our own nature, because it has made the essence of religion consist in progress itself."\*

From these remarks we find the explanation of the failure of all creeds and rules to fix religious faith and worship, and hence the continued struggle between what may be called the sacerdotal power, and that of the people. The religious sentiment of an improving people requires for its continuance and developement, that forms of religious worship should vary. But those who are profiting by the present forms, seldom approve of change, and perhaps conscientiously believe that it would be injurious, even when it is absolutely necessary for the moral progress of mankind. If the opposition of the sacerdotal power is continued, then comes a revolution in the religious world, similar to those in the political, because religious teachers or rulers, have ceased to be in accordance in opinion with the mass of mankind, and the latter must eventually triumph, for the interests of the great mass is not to be sacrificed to that of the few.

But Christ, by establishing no ceremonies, adapted his system to the whole wide universe, to man in all ages and climates; and notwithstanding Christianity has not always been so taught; notwithstanding some

\* Degerando on Self Education.

religious teachers are ever striving to fix the attention of mankind on puerile and insignificant ceremonies and projects that have no moral tendency, yet they can succeed only for a short time, for with such things an improving people will be disgusted, as were the people of France by the exhibition of relics on the return of the emigrant clergy.

The people will eventually be true to themselves and to the religious sentiment implanted in them by their Creator ; and will improve in morality through succeeding, as they have in past ages, though their improvement may occasionally be checked.

Thus Christianity, co-operating as it naturally does, and as its Divine founder intended it should, with all other truth, will ever contribute to the improvement of man. And by properly developing and improving his physical powers ; by strengthening and exercising his moral and intellectual faculties, will enable him to control his sensual and vicious propensities, and render him as perfect as his nature will permit.

## CHAPTER I.

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### OF HUMAN SACRIFICES.

IN commencing an inquiry respecting the influence which the Religious Sentiment has had upon the health and physical well-being of mankind, it seems proper, first, to consider the most deplorable of all its effects, the destruction of human beings, in accordance with the supposed requirements of the Deity. I do not, however, under this head, intend to include the immense number of mankind who have perished in religious wars, nor even those who have suffered death for their religious opinions, or by order of the Inquisition; but shall confine myself to a brief notice of some of the numerous instances in which men have been sacrificed to a deity, to appease his anger, or to obtain his aid and blessing.

The practice of sacrificing human beings, as atoning or propitiatory offerings, has been common in all savage nations, and among all people while in a very low state of civilization. It has, however, uniformly ceased as men became enlightened; and though it still prevails in a few countries, and among the most barbarous nations, yet it does so but to a slight extent in comparison with its former prevalence. We may, therefore, reasonably indulge the hope, that the time is not far distant when it will be entirely abandoned throughout the world.

It has been said of the ancient Egyptians, that they did not shed the blood of animals upon their altars, yet, according to Eusebius, they sacrificed men unto the gods. That this is true, is evident from the bas-reliefs of their temples, which represent, by various emblems, this cruel practice; and Strabo says, the Egyptians, every year, sacrificed a noble virgin to the Nile. The Cretans adhered to this cruel rite for a long time, as did also the nations of Arabia. The people of Dumah, instead of worshipping images, sacrificed a child every year, and buried it beneath an altar which they worshipped instead of an idol. The Scythians, (a) Persians, (b) Cyprians and Rhodians, the Phocians and Ionians, all practised human sacrifices. The people of Chios, and Tenedos, according to Porphyry, made it a religious custom to tear a man limb from limb, as a sacrifice to Dionusus. The people of Tauric Chersonesus, sacrificed to Diana every stranger that appeared upon their coast. Aristomenes, the Messenian, though so celebrated for his virtue that he acquired the surname of *Just*, slew three hundred noble Lacedemonians, among whom was Theopompus, the king of Sparta, at the altar of Jupiter, at Ithome. The Lacedemonians could not, however, complain of the cruelty of this sacrifice, for they offered like victims to Mars. Porphyry quotes Phylarchus, who says that in the early ages of Greece, each state made it a rule, before marching against an enemy, to solicit a blessing upon the expedition, by sacrificing men to the gods. The Romans also killed men

(a) See Bryant's *Analysis of Ancient Mythology*, vol. vi. for more full details of human sacrifices in former times.

(b) Amestris, wife of Xerxes, buried alive fourteen persons, for the good of her own soul.

for like purposes. Some individuals among the Roman citizens voluntarily devoted themselves to the infernal gods, and were buried alive; while others were compelled to suffer in like manner.

“There is reason to think,” says Bryant, “that for a long time, all the principal captives who graced the triumphs of the Romans, were, at the close of that cruel pageantry, put to death at the altar of Jupiter Capitolinus.” (c) Caius Marius offered up to the infernal deities, his only daughter, Calpurnia, in order to obtain a victory over his enemies, the Cimbri. He was led to resort to this, by advice which he believed he had received in a dream. Augustus Cæsar sacrificed, on the Ides of March, three hundred chosen men, both of the equestrian and senatorian order, at an altar dedicated to the manes of his uncle Julius. Porphyry assures us, that in his day, a man was sacrificed every year at the shrine of Jupiter Latiaris. Aurelian and Heliogabalus offered like victims unto the Syrian deity that the latter introduced into Rome.

The Gauls and Germans were greatly attached to this horrid custom. Among these people, on the transaction of any important business, men were sacrificed to various gods, particularly to Hesus, Taranis, and Thautales. The altars of these gods were usually situated in gloomy woods, far removed from the common resort of men. They were held in great reverence, and to be

(c) Notwithstanding the mass of testimony to show that human sacrifices have been common in all parts of the world, some have endeavoured, though ineffectually, to rescue the human race from this heinous charge; (See Dissertation of M. Morin, in the first volume of *Histoire de l'Academie Royale des Inscriptions*;) but for abundant proof of the fact, and a complete refutation of the arguments of M. Morin, see the dissertation of Abbe de Boissey, in the same volume.

approached only at particular seasons. The persons to be sacrificed were led to these horrid shades by the druids or priests, who presided at the sacrifice, and performed the cruel duties of executioners. Tacitus mentions a battle between the Hermunduri and the Catti, in which the former were victorious, and at the close of the contest, sacrificed all the prisoners they had taken.

This practice also prevailed at one time, among all the nations of Northern Europe, the Massagettæ, the Getes, the Sarmatians, and particularly among the people upon the Baltic, as the Suevii and the Scandinavians, who believed that their happiness and security depended upon the occasional sacrifice of their fellow men to the gods. The chief of these were Thor and Woden, whose favor, as they seemed to believe, could be propitiated only by the blood of men. They had many very celebrated places of religious worship, but the one most revered and most frequented was at Upsal. At this place was holden, every year, a grand festival, which lasted nine days, during which time the people sacrificed numerous animals and men. The more noble the rank of the victim, the more acceptable was the sacrifice supposed to be to the deity. The information of the intended sacrifice of a Prince or a King, gave rise to universal joy, as being likely to ensure the special and particular favor of their gods. During a famine, Domalder, the king, was sacrificed to restore plenty. At another time, the Prince Olaus Tretelger, was burnt alive to Woden. Harald, the son of Gunild, says Ver-shegan, "sacrificed two of his own sons unto his idols, to the end he might obtain of them such a tempest at sea as should disperse the shipping of the king of Denmark." Another king sacrificed nine sons to his idol,

in hopes to prolong his own life by this unnatural offering. Common men were also sacrificed during this celebration, and in very great numbers. Adam Bremensis says there was not a tree in this dreadful grove at Upsal, but was stained with human gore; and these trees were therefore revered, as if endued with some portion of divinity.

The manner in which human victims were sacrificed, varied considerably. Some were killed by a blow on the head, which split it through the middle; others were put to death by severe blows upon the breast bone. The Cimbri cut into the bowels in order to divine future events from the appearance they presented. Some of the victims had their brains beaten out; some were killed by being dashed against a wall, while others were shot through with arrows, and after they were dead they were hung upon trees and left to putrify. Adam Bremensis, who lived in the tenth century, says that seventy human bodies were thus found at one time in a wood belonging to the Suevi. Dillman, an author, who lived about the same period, speaks of a place in Zealand where ninety-nine persons were sacrificed every year to the god *Swantowite*. The people who witnessed these ceremonies, the mention of which is to us distressing, were filled with joy, and during their continuance, gave themselves up to revelry and feasting. Their banquets were magnificent, and all were invited to partake; even the numerous servants were allowed to attend and participate in the general festivity. These servants, however, at the conclusion of the festival, were smothered to death, or in some other way destroyed. (d)

(d) Bryant.

It has been questioned by some, whether the Hebrews ever sacrificed human beings, in the observance of any of their religious rites ; but of this, I think there can be no doubt. The Scriptures represent them as sacrificing unto Moloch. Thus in the fifth chapter of Amos, we read, "O house of Israel, ye have borne the tabernacle of your Moloch and Chiun your images, the star of your god, which ye made to yourselves." Solomon built a temple to Moloch, on the mount of Olives, as we learn from 1 Kings, xi. 7. "Then did Solomon build a high place for Chamosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that *is* before Jerusalem, and for Moloch, the abomination of the children of Ammon." Manasseh also reared up altars to Baal, and made his sons pass through the fire. This conduct of the Israelites, is alluded to by Stephen, Acts vii. 43. "Ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your god Remphan, figures which ye made to worship them." Some, however, have supposed that they did not actually sacrifice their children to Moloch, but merely made them pass between two fires, or leap over a fire sacred to Moloch. That they destroyed them, also, is positively stated in the Old Testament. Thus the Psalmist, in the 106th Psalm, says of the Israelites, "yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils, and shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and of their daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan ; and the land was polluted with blood." Jeremiah also says, "They have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the valley of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire." In the 16th chapter of Ezekiel, it is said of the abominations of Jerusalem, "Moreover, thou hast taken thy sons and thy daughters,

whom thou hast borne unto me, and these hast thou sacrificed unto them to be devoured ;” and again, speaking of the abominations of Aholah and Aholilah, (symbolical names denoting the two kingdoms of Judah and Samaria,) “For when they had slain their children to their idols, then they came the same day into my sanctuary to profane it, and lo, thus they have done in the midst of my house.” (e) Against these awful rites the Almighty had often warned his chosen people, and in fact, it was chiefly for the adherence of the Canaanites to these rites, that they were swallowed up and destroyed by the Israelites, as we learn from Scripture, as also from “the Book of Wisdom,” written by a Jew of Alexandria, in the century preceding the coming of Christ ; “For it was thy will (O Lord) to destroy by the hand of our fathers, both those old inhabitants of thy holy land, whom thou hatest for doing most odious works of witchcrafts and wicked sacrifices ; and also those merciless murderers of children, and devourers of man’s flesh, and the feasts of blood ; with their priests out of the midst of their idolatrous crew, and the parents that killed with their own hands, souls destitute of help ; for it was a cursed seed from the beginning.”

In some of the countries where the sacrifice of men to the gods has prevailed, captives taken in war have been the only victims, while in other places, they have been chosen by lot from the mass of the people. But in many countries, the nearest relatives, and the most fair and

(e) Is there any thing remarkable in the prompt obedience of Abraham to the Divine command to sacrifice his son ? Abraham was undoubtedly an idolater in early life, previous to his call, and had no doubt been accustomed to witness, or at least to hear of sacrificing the most dear children to the gods. [See Calmet’s Dictionary of the Bible, art. *Abraham*.]

promising children were offered up to the gods. The Carthaginians, who were a colony from Tyre, carried with them the religion and the religious customs of their mother country. These consisted in the adoration of several deities, but more particularly of Kronus, an Oriental deity, the god of light and fire, called by the Greeks — *Koronus*. This was the same as the Moloch of the Phœnicians. Nothing in history is more shocking than the accounts of the worship of this deity, by the Tyrians and Carthaginians. On the approach of any calamity, or when any danger was apprehended, they sacrificed to Moloch whatever was most dear to them. When Hamilcar received a check in Sicily, apprehending defeat and danger, he immediately resorted to bloody sacrifices. He first sacrificed a boy to Kronus, and then drowned a number of priests, to appease the god of the sea. At another time, after a defeat in battle, the Carthaginians, seeing their enemies approaching, seized at once two hundred children of the most noble families, and offered them as a public sacrifice to the gods, to avert the impending danger. Indeed, it appears to be well established that these people reared children to be sacrificed; they were purchased of their parents, brought up to the altar like sheep, and put to death as offerings to the gods. Those who were sacrificed to Kronus or Moloch, were thrown into the arms of a large molten idol, made red with heat, the arms turning downwards, so as to drop the victims placed in them into the flames below.

“The rabbins assure us, that the idol Moloch was of brass, sitting on a throne of the same metal, adorned with a royal crown, having the head of a calf, and his arms extended as if to embrace any one; that when they offered children to him, they heated the statue from within, by a great fire; and when it was burning hot,

put the miserable victim within its arms, where it was soon consumed by the violence of the heat; and that the cries of the children might not be heard, they made a great noise with drums and other instruments about the idol. Others say that his arms were extended, and reaching toward the ground, so that when they put a child within his arms, it immediately fell into a great fire which was burning at the foot of the statue." [Calmet's Dictionary of the Bible—art. *Moloch*.]

Fathers and mothers embraced their children, thus devoted to death, with great tenderness, and encouraged them on to their fate. They even led them themselves to the sacrifice, carefully suppressing all tears, and all appearances of sorrow, from fear of offending the deity, and thus rendering the sacrifice useless. (*f*)

In reference to these cruel practices, as religious rites, Plutarch asks—"Whether it would not have been better for the Galatæ, or for the Scythians, to have had no tradition or conception of any superior beings, than to have formed to themselves notions of gods, who delighted in the blood of men: of gods, who esteemed human victims the most acceptable and perfect sacrifice? Would it not," says he, "have been more eligible for the Carthaginians to have had the atheist Critias, or Diagoras, their lawgiver, at the commencement of their polity, and to have been taught that there was neither God nor de-

(*f*) Strange effect of education, and of the *religious sentiment*! The Phœnicians who had recourse to these awful rites, would not hurt a cow, on any consideration; and the Carthaginians, though they could sacrifice their children without emotion, considered it worse than sacrilege to wound an ape. But similar instances of the religious sentiment, or of the disposition to adore, overcoming reason and natural affection, have been common among mankind. In Egypt, a crocodile ate up a child, and the mother, who witnessed it, rejoiced at the blessed fate of the child, who had, so fortunately, been eaten by a god.

mon, than to have sacrificed in the manner they were wont, to the god which they adored ; wherein they acted, not as the person did, whom Empedocles describes in some poetry, where he exposes this unnatural custom. The sire there, with many idle vows, offers up unwittingly, his son for a sacrifice ; but the youth was so changed in feature and figure, that his father did not know him. These people used, knowingly and wilfully, to go through this bloody work, and slaughter their own offspring. Even they who were childless, would not be exempted from this cursed tribute, but purchased children at a price, of the poorer sort, and put them to death with as little remorse as one would kill a lamb or a chicken. The mother who sacrificed the child, stood by without any seeming sense of what she was losing, and without uttering a groan. If a sigh did by chance escape, she lost all the honor which she proposed to herself in the offering ; and the child was, notwithstanding, slain. All the time of this celebrity, while the children were wandering, there was a noise of clarions and tabors sounding before the idol, that the cries and shrieks of the victims might not be heard." "Tell me now," says Plutarch, "if the monsters of old, the Typhons and the giants, were to expel the gods and to rule the world in their stead, could they require a service more horrid than these infernal rites and sacrifices ?"

It is difficult, no doubt, to answer these questions of Plutarch satisfactorily ; and, in fact, it appears as idle to talk of a nation without religion, as without love of offspring, or any other instinctive propensity. Mankind have evidently been created with a disposition to adore, and consequently, no nation has ever been found without a religion. But if this were possible—if a people did exist,

having no ideas of religion, I think their condition would be worse than that of a people who observed requirements as absurd, and rites as cruel as those which have just been mentioned. Notwithstanding the shocking character of the rites and ceremonies of such a religion, the observance of its requirements, I have no doubt, has maintained in man, through fear of the indignation of the gods, a reverence of sacred things and a regard for right conduct, which is essential to the well-being of men and of communities. The religion of the Romans was exceedingly absurd in its best forms, and but few of the more enlightened in the time of Cicero, had any belief in it; yet we find he commends it as a wise institution, well adapted to the genius of Rome and the intelligence of the times, and he inculcates an adherence to its rites. Polybius, on the same subject, says—"The greatest advantage which the Roman government seems to have over other States, is in the opinions publicly entertained by them about the gods; and that very thing which is so generally decried by other mortals, sustained the republic of Rome—I mean, *Superstition*. For this was carried by them to such a height, and introduced so effectually, both into the private lives of the citizens and the public affairs of the city, that one cannot help being surprised at it. But I take it all to have been contrived for the sake of the populace. For if a society could be formed of wise men only, such a scheme would not be necessary: but since the multitude is always giddy, and agitated by illicit desires, wild resentments, violent passions, there was no way left of restraining them, but by the help of such secret terrors and tragical fictions. It was not, therefore, without great prudence and foresight, that the ancients took care to instill into them these notions of the gods and infernal punishments, which the

moderns, on the other hand, are now rashly and absurdly endeavoring to extirpate.”

I am of opinion that all religions the world has ever known, have been of use, and they have proved injurious only when they have failed to keep pace with the progress of intelligence; then they undoubtedly tend to retard the progress of mankind.

In America, we find that similar religious customs have prevailed, and probably still prevail among some of the Aboriginal tribes. On the first discovery of this country, human sacrifices were not unknown here, though they were of more common occurrence in the southern than in the northern portions of the continent. According to Spanish writers, the nations of South America, though they had then made considerable progress in the arts of civilized life, were greatly devoted to these bloody rites. Gomora says that every year there were at least 20,000 men sacrificed to the gods by the Mexicans. According to Acosta, Montezuma, in the midst of wealth, luxury, magnificence, and many of the polished arts of life, sacrificed twenty thousand men every year to the sun. In Peru, children were sacrificed, and in this respect, they surpassed the Mexicans in cruelty. (*g*) At the consecration of the great temple of Mexico, by Ahuitzal the eighth king of the country, he sacrificed from sixty to seventy thousand prisoners. (*h*) They had immense buildings, where they deposited the heads of these victims, and where the Spaniards counted at one time one hundred and thirty-six thousand heads,

(*g*) In cases of sickness, Acosta tells us it was usual for a Peruvian to sacrifice his son to *Viracocha*, beseeching him to spare his life, and to be satisfied with the blood of his child.

(*h*) Clavigero.

so says Gomara, and he was thus told by two of the officers of Cortes, who counted them.

At the time of the invasion of Mexico, the chief temple occupied a large space of ground, and was garrisoned by the body-guard of the sovereign, Montezuma, the tenth and last king of Mexico. This temple was surrounded by a high wall, having many towers or pyramids, on which were placed their idol gods. At a little distance from the temple, stood the tower, where the sacrifices of men were made, which was constantly covered with human blood. "In the larger temple," says a late writer, "were two altars highly adorned, and over them the gigantic figures of their war god, Huitzilopuchtli, and his brother, Texcalepuca, the god of the infernal regions. The first had a great face, terrible eyes, was covered with gold and jewels, had a necklace of gold and silver wrought into the figures of human heads and hearts, ornamented with precious stones of a blue color, and his huge body was bound with golden serpents; the other had the countenance of a bear, with great shining eyes, and an equal profusion of gold and jewels, wrought into, if possible, a more diabolic assemblage of infernal imagery. Before the first of these figures lay three human hearts wet with human blood; before the latter four—taken from the victims while alive, by making a sudden incision in the side, tearing out the heart, and casting it before the idol, while the eyes of the victim were rolling in the death agony, and the limbs quivering in the mortal pang. These sacrifices were so frequently repeated, that the stench from the shedding of blood and its consequent putrefaction, was almost intolerable. In this place was a drum of enormous size, the head of which was composed of the skins of large serpents, making a noise,

when struck, that might be heard at the distance of two leagues ; and, says Bernal Diaz, so doleful that it deserved to be named the music of the infernal regions. The bodies of all their idols far exceeded the human form in size, and were composed of mixtures of pulse and grain, formed into a paste with human blood." Mr. Southey in his "Madoc," thus describes one of the objects of this awful worship :—

" On a huge throne, with four huge silver snakes,  
As if the keepers of the Sanctuary  
Circled, with stretching neck and fangs displayed,  
Mexitli sat ; another graven snake  
Belted with scales of gold his monstrous bulk ;  
Around his neck a loathsome collar hung  
Of human hearts ; the face was masked with gold ;  
His specular eyes seemed fire ; one hand upreared  
A club, the other as in battle, held  
The shield ; and over all suspended, hung  
The banner of the nation." \* \* \*

It has been remarked that at the time of the discovery of America, human sacrifices prevailed less among the people of North America, than among those of the South. Still the Aborigines of the north sometimes had recourse to them. The Indians of Natchez—according to M. Dirmont—formerly worshipped the sun, and burnt on the funeral pile of their chiefs, human victims, giving them tobacco to stupify them, as the Brahmins intoxicated their victims. A people living upon the Mississippi, named Tensas, like the Natchez, their neighbors, worshipped the sun, and had a temple for that luminary. The temple, having been set on fire by lightning, was all in flames, when some French travellers saw the people throw children into the fire, one after another, to appease the incensed deity.

Human sacrifices were once known in England.

“Even this island,” says Bishop Porteus, “where benevolence and humanity have now (thanks to the Gospel) fixed their seat ; this island was, at one time, (under the gloomy and ferocious despotism of the Druids,) polluted with the religious murder of its wretched inhabitants.” In fact, Druidism took deep root in the British islands, and some of its less revolting rites and observances are still maintained there ; thus showing what the history of all forms of religion show—that no new system is ever established that has not some portion of the old system incorporated with it ; proving that, so strong is the attachment of mankind to some form of religious worship, that a people cannot be induced to abandon at once a system the most absurd, cruel or arbitrary, even to embrace another which is far better. “A town in Perthshire, on the borders of the Highlands, is called *Tillie* (or *Tullie*) *beltane*, i. e. *the eminence*, or rising-ground, *of the fire of Baal*. In the neighborhood is a drudical temple of eight upright stones, where it is supposed that the fire was kindled. At some distance from this is another temple of the same kind, but smaller, and near it a well, still held in great veneration. On *Beltane* morning, superstitious people go to this well, and drink of it ; then they make a procession round it, as we are informed, nine times. After this, they in like manner go round the temple. So deep-rooted is this heathenish superstition in the minds of many who reckon themselves good Protestants, that they will not neglect these rites, even when *Beltane* falls on sabbath.” “On the first day of May, which is called *Beltan*, or *Bal-tein, day*, all the boys in a township, or hamlet, meet in the moors. They cut a table in the green sod, of a round figure, by casting a trench in the ground of such circumference as

to hold the whole company. They kindle a fire, and dress a repast of eggs and milk in the consistence of a custard. They knead a cake of oat-meal, which is toasted at the embers against a stone. After the custard is eaten up, they divide the cake into so many portions, as similar as possible to one another in size and shape, as there are persons in the company. They daub one of these portions all over with charcoal, until it be perfectly black. They put all the bits of cake into a bonnet. Every one, blindfold, draws out a portion. He who holds the bonnet, is entitled to the last bit. Whoever draws the black bit, is the devoted person who is to be sacrificed to Baal, whose favor they mean to implore, in rendering the year productive of the sustenance of man and beast. There is little doubt of these inhuman sacrifices having been once offered in this country as well as in the East, although they now pass from the act of sacrificing, and only compel the devoted person to leap three times through the flames; with which the ceremonies of this festival are closed.”—[Statistic Accounts of Scotland, vols. iii. and xi.]

In China, notwithstanding the denial of Voltaire, it is certain that human beings have been religiously sacrificed. The emperor Can-hi, made a law against the practice, but women were afterwards strangled at the funeral of the Prince, Ta Vang, brother of the emperor of Can-hi, and in late years, they have been known to throw their children into the river, in honor of the spirit of the rivers.

Human sacrifices have greatly prevailed among the Hindoos. Their Veedas, or sacred books, even enjoin them, and Buchanan, in a memoir on the “Expediency of an Ecclesiastical Establishment in India,” informs us

of their prevalence at the present time. The sacrifices to the goddess, Kalee, are truly shocking. This goddess may be considered as one of the most terrible of the ten forms, which the goddess Doorga assumed in order to destroy two giants. "In the Kalika pooranu," says Ward, in his "View of the Hindoos," "MEN are pointed out, among other animals, as proper for sacrifice. It is here said that the blood of a tiger pleases the goddess for one hundred years, and the blood of a lion, a rein-deer, or a man, a thousand. But by the sacrifice of three men, she is pleased one hundred thousand years! I insert two or three extracts from the sanguinary chapter of the Kalika pooranu:—'Let a human victim be sacrificed at a place of holy worship, or at a cemetery where dead bodies are buried. Let the oblation be performed in the part of the cemetery called heruku, or at a temple of Kamakshya, or on a mountain. Now attend to the mode: The human victim is to be immolated in the east division, which is sacred to Bhoiruvu; the head is to be presented in the south division, which is looked upon as the place of skulls, sacred to Bhoirvou, and the blood is to be presented in the west division, which is denominated heruku. Having immolated a human victim, with all the requisite ceremonies, at a cemetery, or holy place, let the sacrificer be cautious not to cast his eyes upon it. The victim must be a person of good appearance, and be prepared by ablutions, and requisite ceremonies, such as eating consecrated food the day before, and by abstinence from flesh and venery; and must be adorned with chaplets of flowers, and besmeared with sandal wood. Then causing the victim to face the north, let the sacrificer worship the several deities presiding over different parts of the victim's body; let the worship be then paid to

the victim himself by his name. Let him worship Brumha in the victim's rhundu, i. e. cave of Brumha, cavity in the skulls, under the spot where the suturæ coronalis and sagittalis meet. Let him worship the earth in his nose, &c. Worshipping the king of serpents, let him pronounce the following incantation:—

' O best of men ! O most auspicious ! O thou who art an assemblage of all the deities, and most exquisite ! bestow thy protection on me, save me thy devoted ; save my sons, my cattle and kindred ; preserve the State, the ministers belonging to it, and all friends ; and as death is unavoidable, part with (thy organs of) life, doing an act of benevolence. Bestow upon me, O most auspicious ! the bliss which is obtained by the most austere devotion, by acts of charity, and the performance of religious ceremonies ; and at the same time, O most excellent ! attain supreme bliss thyself. May thy auspices, O most auspicious ! keep me secure from rakshushus, pishachus, terrors, serpents, bad princes, enemies and other evils ; and death being inevitable, charm Bhuguvutee in thy last moments by copious streams of blood spouting from the arteries of thy fleshly neck.' When this has been done, O my children ! the victim is even as myself, and the guardian deities of the ten quarters take place in him ; then Brumha and all the other deities assemble in the victim, and be he ever so great a sinner, he becomes pure from sin, and when pure, his blood changes to ambrosia, and he gains the love of Muhadevee, the goddess of the yogu nidru, (i. e. the tranquil repose of the mind from an abstraction of ideas,) who is the goddess of the whole universe, the very universe itself. He does not return for a considerable length of time in the human form, but becomes a ruler of the

gunu dertas, and is much respected by me myself. The victim who is impure, from sin, or any other cause, Kamakshya will not even hear named. The blind, the crippled, the aged, the sick, the afflicted with ulcers, the hermaphrodite, the imperfectly formed, the scarred, the timid, the leprous, the dwarfish, and the perpetrator of muha patuku, (heinous offences, such as slaying a bramhun, drinking spirits, stealing gold, or defiling a spiritual teacher's bed,) one under twelve years of age, one who is impure from the death of a kinsman, &c. one who is impure from the death of muha goroo, (father and mother,) which impurity lasts one whole year; these severally are unfit subjects for immolation, even though rendered pure by sacred texts. Let not a bramhun or a chundalu be sacrificed; nor a prince, nor that which has been already presented to a bramhun, or a deity; nor the offspring of a prince; nor one who has conquered in battle; nor the offspring of a bramhun, or of a kshutriyu; nor a childless brother; nor a father; nor a learned person; nor one who is unwilling; nor the maternal uncle of the sacrificer. The day previous to a human sacrifice, let the victim be prepared by the text manushtuku and three devee gundhu shuktus, and the texts wadrungu, and by touching his head with the axe, and besmearing the axe with sandal, &c. perfumes, and then taking some of the sandal, &c. from off the axe, and besmearing the victim's neck therewith. If the severed head of a victim smile, it indicates increase of prosperity and long life to the sacrificer, without doubt; and if it speak, whatever it says will come to pass.'

“ This work further lays down directions for a person's drawing blood from himself, and offering it to the god-

dess, repeating the following incantation ; ‘Hail ! supreme delusion ! Hail ! goddess of the universe ! Hail ! thou who fulfillest the desires of all ! May I presume to offer the blood of my body ; and wilt thou deign to accept it, and be propitious toward me.’”

I have said in the commencement of this subject, that human sacrifices have uniformly ceased, as men became more enlightened. Benjamin Constant, in his great work on Religion, says these sacrifices have rapidly fallen into disuse, in countries independent of priests, but have been perpetuated a long time, where the sacerdotal power has been great ; a power that never voluntarily renounces any ancient usage. It is certain that the Greeks early condemned the practice, and for the most part held it in great horror. With them it was resorted to only in times of the most pressing danger and under unusual circumstances. It never was a custom to which they were much attached, and in fact it was borrowed from other nations. Whenever the Greeks did resort to it, it was by the advice of the *diviners*, and sometimes, their advice in this respect was not followed, as was the case before the battle of Leuctra. The presages having been menacing, the diviners proposed to Pelopidas to appease the gods by human victims, but he rejected their counsel. Themistocles, in like circumstances, obeyed the diviners, but not without great reluctance. Other rites, less bloody, were usually substituted for these among the Greeks.

Neither did this practice greatly prevail among the Romans. During the consulship of Lentulus and Crassus, a law was enacted, forbidding human sacrifices. Adrian took great pains to abolish the custom. He might have been influenced to this course by Christianity.

That he had heard of it is certain, as it is said he wished to enrol Christ among the gods of Rome. After a time, the Romans substituted images for human victims. Junius Brutus ordered, that instead of immolating infants to Larundu, other ceremonies, less cruel, should be performed; and that in place of throwing thirty old people into the Tiber annually, as had been the custom, images of men should be substituted. In commemoration of this last triumph of humanity, certain games were instituted among the Romans.

Among the Franks and Gauls, the practice was long continued, even for several centuries after the Christian era; and though it can now hardly be credited, yet it is a fact that the Christians sold slaves to them to be sacrificed. (*i*)

In the islands of the South Sea and the Pacific Ocean, human sacrifices have prevailed until a very late period. Mr. Ellis, in his researches in Polynesia, says, "if an expedition of any magnitude was in contemplation, human sacrifices were offered to ensure the co-operation of the war-gods. The number sacrificed at a time varied from two to twenty." He says the custom had not ceased in 1816, for in that year a young man was sacrificed at *Tahita*, to ensure success in an attack upon their enemies. He relates another similar instance which occurred in 1808. (*j*)

(*i*) Constant "De la Religion," vol. iv. p. 228. To us, this is almost incredible, though not more so, perhaps, than the fact will be to succeeding generations, that the pious John Newton was engaged in the slave trade even after he had become distinguished for his piety; or that a celebrated divine, and President of a College in New England, sent to Guinea to obtain a slave for himself; or that many of the clergy in this country were engaged in the manufacture and sale of ardent spirits, until within a very few years.

(*j*) Polynesian Researches, by William Ellis; 4 volumes.

Messrs. Tyerman and Bennett, (*k*) have given a very interesting account of the sacrifice of three men and four hundred hogs, at Oahu, in order to appease the gods, and to mitigate the yellow fever.

“In the year 1804, when the late king, Tamehameha, was on his way from Hawaii, to invade Tanai, he halted with an army of eight thousand men, at Oahu. The yellow fever broke out among the troops, and in the course of a few days, swept away more than two thirds of them. During the plague, the king repaired to the great maræ at Wytiti, to conciliate the god whom he supposed to be angry. The priests recommended a ten days tabu, the sacrifice of three human victims, four hundred hogs, as many cocoa nuts, and an equal number of branches of plantains. Three men, who had been guilty of the enormous turpitude of eating cocoa nuts with the old queen, (the present king’s mother,) were accordingly seized and led to the maræ. But there being yet three days before the offerings could be duly presented, the eyes of the victims were scooped out, the bones of their arms and legs were broken, and they were then deposited in a house, to await the coup de grace on the day of sacrifice. While these maimed and miserable creatures were in the height of their suffering, some persons, moved by curiosity, visited them in prison, and found them neither raving nor desponding, but sullenly singing the national *huru*, dull as the drone of a bagpipe, and hardly more variable, as though they were insensible of the past, and indifferent to the future. When the slaughtering time arrived, one of them was placed under the legs of the idol, and the other two were laid,

(*k*) Journal of Voyages and Travels, by the Rev. Daniel Tyerman and George Bennett, Esq. ; 3 volumes.

with the hogs and fruit, upon the altar-frame. They were then beaten with clubs upon the shoulders, till they died of the blows. This was told us by an eye-witness of the murderous spectacle. And thus men kill one another, and think that they do God service."

Modern navigators have found this practice established on every newly discovered island throughout the vast Pacific ocean. In the interior of Africa, it is said, they still sacrifice captives to the gods to obtain their favor. Snelgrave was in the camp of king Dahome, after his conquest of Adra and Whidaw, and says he saw four hundred Whidaws, and a multitude of people of other nations, sacrificed to the gods. In India, it has also continued to the present time. The Indians throw men into the Ganges, who are devoured by sharks. Families desirous of posterity, vow to devote every fifth child to death for the gods; and European sailors have seen, of late years, parents push back into the waves, a young boy thus devoted, who was trying to save himself by swimming.

Such are a few references to the custom of sacrificing men, with the hope of obtaining thereby the favor of the gods; to which horrid custom men have been led by religious feelings, unguided by reason or revelation. Shall I add to this account, the innumerable company of martyrs of all religions and all sects; or the hosts who have perished in the wars of Religion? (*l*) Shall I add that 30,000 widows annually devote themselves to death in India, on the funeral piles of their husbands, to which course they are urged by their religious teach-

(*l*) Father Paul (council of Trent,) computes that in the Netherlands alone, there were hanged or put to death, 50,000 men, from the time of the edict of Charles the 5th, against reformers.

ers? or that above 30,000 men were put to death in Spain, by order of the Inquisition? Shall I narrate the carnage of St. Bartholomew's day? or detail the fact that in one century, 100,000 human beings were put to death for witchcraft in Germany, 30,000 in England, and more in Scotland?

But enough. Though these and other similar sacrifices seem to be connected with the subject under discussion, we would willingly draw the veil over them. The details already given are sufficient to show that all religions and all sects have been improved by increased intelligence, and above all, by the introduction of Christianity; though when we see such men as the pious Baxter, and his associates, Calamy, and Mather, borne along by the tide of prejudice and credulity, and lending their aid through ignorance to crimes which now make us shudder, we are constrained to say that Christianity, though of Divine origin, and of itself sufficient for man's salvation, is ever retarded by ignorance and advanced by knowledge. All history shows, that its true spirit has ever been misunderstood or disregarded, where the human mind has been groping in the darkness of ignorance; that it has been comprehended, and its true excellence appreciated, only in enlightened communities; yea, more, that where it has not been thus properly understood, it has been converted into an engine for debasing and crushing the human mind, instead of elevating and improving it, as was assuredly the intent of its Divine author.

In conclusion, the details given in this section serve to convince us that the religious, is, of all the sentiments that have been given to man, the most powerful and indomitable, but that to be greatly beneficial to mankind, it needs the guidance of enlightened reason.

## CHAPTER II.

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RELIGIOUS RITES WHICH MUTILATE THE HUMAN BODY. CIRCUMCISION, EMASCULATION, FLAGELLATION, WOUNDING THE BODY BY CUTTING INSTRUMENTS, ANCHYLOSIS OF JOINTS BY RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES.

HAVING noticed, in the preceding chapter, the most deplorable of all the practices to which the religious sentiment has ever impelled mankind, I now proceed to consider some of those religious rites which injure and mutilate the human body without destroying it. It may be said that fasting and other austerities have the effect to change and injure the human form, and they do so ; but the effects resulting from these causes will be noticed more fully under another head. In this chapter, I shall confine myself to the consideration of those religious rites which directly mutilate the human body.

### *Of Circumcision.*

This very ancient and singular custom, which prevailed in ancient Egypt, and extensively throughout the hot climates of the east, consists in cutting off a small portion of the prepuce or foreskin of males. This was probably not at first a religious custom, but was resorted to for health and cleanliness. A very warm climate,

says M. Delpuch, (*m*) produces great relaxation of this part, and sometimes gives rise to the *batarde*, a kind of gonorrhœa, or ulceration of the foreskin, which circumcision prevents. Gibbon says "health, rather than superstition had first invented it, in the climate of Ethiopia," and he adds in a note, "the Ethiopians have a physical reason for the circumcision of males and even of females. It was practised in Ethiopia, according to Heroditus, long before the introduction of Judaism or Christianity." (*n*)

That it prevailed before the introduction of Judaism, I think is evident from the account given to Abraham, respecting it. No details were given to him as to the manner of performing the operation, or the instruments to be used, but it is referred to as a proceeding with which he was already acquainted. He was merely enjoined to do it as a *sign* of the covenant to be established with him, as we learn from the 17th chapter of Genesis.

"This *is* my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; every man-child among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you. And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man-child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which *is* not of thy seed. He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an ever-

(*m*) "Dictionnaire des Sciences Medicales," vol. v. art. *Circoncision*.

(*n*) "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," chap. xlvii.

lasting covenant. And the uncircumcised man-child, whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people ; he hath broken my covenant.”

“ And Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all that were born in his house, and all that were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham’s house ; and circumcised the flesh of their foreskin in the self-same day, as God had said unto him. And Abraham *was* ninety years old and nine, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. And Ishmael his son was thirteen years old, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. In the self-same day was Abraham circumcised and Ishmael his son. And all the men of his house, born in the house, and bought with money of the stranger, were circumcised with him.”

This custom the Jews have generally been exact in observing.

It appears also to have been sometimes practised on females, but not as a religious custom. M. Labat thinks this is evident from the appearance on examination of Egyptian female mummies. Certain it is, that in general the male mummies from Egypt exhibit proof of their having undergone the operation, at some period of their existence.

Circumcision is practised by the Mahometans, though Mahomet did not enjoin it in the Koran ; his followers seeming to regard it as a valuable and ancient religious custom. It has also prevailed always, among the Arabians, Saracens, and Ishmaelites, who, as well as the Hebrews, sprung from Abraham ; but among none of these nations has it been considered as an essential reli-

gious rite. The Mahometans do not practice it on very young children, nor until the child can distinctly pronounce the leading article of the Mahometan faith—"There is no God but God, and Mahomet is his prophet," or at any time between the ages of six and sixteen, though at twelve or thirteen, it is most common. The Ishmaelites did not circumcise their children until they were thirteen years old, probably because it was at this age that Ishmael himself was circumcised.

Circumcision is, I have no doubt, often necessary, and perhaps generally salutary, in warm countries. In such, it may be very proper to continue it even as a religious rite, for if the practice be salutary, its continuance as a religious rite may secure a more general observance and adoption. There can be no doubt of the fact, (nor much, I think, of the utility of the proceeding,) that in past times many religious duties were enjoined on the people by the priesthood, as a means of preserving health, although this reason was not assigned to the people. (o) But in temperate or cold climates, it is of no use as regards health, and as it subjects children to pain and inconvenience, if not to actual danger, it ought not to be continued. I am of opinion, however, that the early age mentioned in Genesis, for the operation, is better than the later time selected by the Mahometans. I have been assured by those who have visited Turkey, that young men who are circumcised there, are often sick and lame for several days after the operation, and that sometimes, troublesome hemorrhage ensues; a fact which I can readily believe, as I have seen it occur when

(o) See "Revue Medicale, 1829." Such is the conclusion of M. Pariset, of the French Medical Commission in Egypt, respecting the embalming and worship of crocodiles, &c.

the same operation has been performed upon youth in this country, for congenital phymosis. From the New Testament it would appear, that Christ intended that this practice should be discontinued, as also, all other rites and ceremonies; though this, as appears from the 15th and 16th chapters of the Acts of the Apostles, gave rise to much discussion among his followers. But from the silence of Christ and the ignorance of the Apostles of his wishes in relation to this subject, it is evident to me that our Saviour did not desire that such rites and ceremonies should be continued. Even the Apostles, though inspired to teach mankind the religion of Christ, did not claim to have had any instruction upon this subject, or certainly they would not have disagreed as they did, nor would the question have been agitated and permitted to disturb the Apostolic church.

It seems somewhat doubtful whether the Jews, previous to the time of our Saviour, had strictly and generally resorted to circumcision; for Peter, after much disputation upon the subject, arose and said, in opposition to the continuance of the custom—"Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear." But though the question appears to have been then settled against the necessity of having recourse to circumcision under the Christian dispensation, yet it was occasionally practiced by the Christians. For instance, Paul circumcised Timothy; though this appears to have been done from prudential motives, in order to render him more acceptable to the Jews.

### *Of Emasculation.*

The making of Eunuchs, so far as I have learned, has been enjoined by but few religious creeds, and practiced by but few religious sects, though many individuals have advised and practiced it as a religious duty. The priests of Cybele and of Atys, among the Syrians, condemned themselves to castration ; and Eusebius says, that it became so general for the inhabitants of Osroene and of Syria to have recourse to it, in honor of the goddess of Cybele, that the king Abgarus, in order to prevent it, made a law that those who were guilty of it, should have their hands cut off.

The Almighty, by Moses, (Deut. xxiii.) forbade his people to make eunuchs, and even forbade those who were so, to enter his temple. This law, however, seems to have been repealed ; as in Isaiah, lvi. we read—“ For thus saith the Lord unto the eunuchs that keep my sabbaths and choose *the things* that please me, and take hold of my covenant ; Even unto them will I give in my house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters : I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off.”

The making of eunuchs is referred to in the New Testament. In the nineteenth chapter of Matthew, it is stated—“ There are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother’s womb : and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men : and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven’s sake. He that is able to receive *it*, let him receive it.” This has been differently understood by different persons, and has even led many to emasculate themselves. The great Origen did so, as

also some of his followers, and some of the ancient Christian sects, though these have been since considered heretical. The Catholic Church condemned the practice, and Pope Clement XIV. forbade all such as had been castrated in infancy to improve their voices, to sing or chant in the churches.

But fanatical individuals, in their endeavors to fulfil whatever they deem scripture injunctions, and to subdue every desire that they consider carnal, in violation of reason and common sense, have resorted to this sacrifice. M. Blandin (*n*) says he attended a young ecclesiastic, who, full of health and strength, was still ashamed to be for an instant abandoned to a passion, toward which nature drew him, and therefore considered it his duty to emasculate himself, which fancied duty, he performed. I have been informed of several others, and have seen one similar instance, in a pious young man who performed the operation on himself, in whom I could discover no other symptom of mental derangement, than this strong desire, as he expressed it—"to subdue all carnal desires, and to fulfil all righteousness." I need not comment on the misuse of scripture which is made to justify such conduct, nor need I give any other caution at this age of the world, on this subject, than I would give on all religious subjects; and that is—to guard most vigilantly against the first approach of fanaticism. In all situations and under all circumstances, let enlightened reason and sober reflection guide to what is just and appropriate, and to the meaning and intention of the authors of the New Testament.

(*n*) "Dictionnaire de Medicine et de Chirurgie Practiques,"—vol. v.

In every instance I have known of mental alienation produced by religious excitement, I have noticed that the alienation was preceded by some unreasonableness or fanatical conduct, which at the time was not so considered, but even pronounced, by those who were themselves zealously religious, commendable, and as evidencing advancement in religious attainments. I am now attending a young man whose mind is deranged, and his brain, as I apprehend, diseased ; which disease was apparently induced by strong religious excitement, and long attendance on protracted meetings. After he became awakened and converted, as his parents and instructors supposed, he soon became distinguished for his zeal and engagedness, and for his ability in prayer. The consciousness of this distinction, and the praise which his efforts elicited, with probably an increased degree of excitement in his own mind on the general subject of religion, determined him to strive for higher excellence, and he resolved to pray more, and to commit the whole Bible to memory. His mother became somewhat alarmed at this, but her fears were partially allayed by the assurance of one of their religious teachers, that " young people were not apt to be too conscientious, or too much disposed to piety." The youth therefore continued on, constantly striving to make himself more perfect, and finally resolved literally to fulfil the scripture injunction to *pray always*. It was at this time that mental alienation was first perceived by his friends, though it had probably existed in a degree, for weeks or months. Measures were then taken to restore him ; which, however, will probably prove unavailing ; a constant pain in the head, sleeplessness and delirium, indicating settled disorder there. Now had this young man been strongly

solicited by some sensual propensities, it seems to me highly probable that, like Origen, he might have endeavored literally to fulfil other supposed commands of scripture.

Origen himself, though he ultimately became renowned for genius, industry and erudition, according to Mosheim, early exhibited a tendency to fanaticism ; and in fact he never was distinguished for the soundness of his judgment. His father was a very devout man, and took great pains to instruct him in the Holy Scriptures, while yet very young. His son became renowned for his precocious genius and early piety. At the age of seventeen, he became eager to suffer martyrdom, but was prevented by his mother. He soon commenced a very austere life, living on the coarsest fare, going barefoot, and sleeping on the ground, (o) and soon after, construing Matt. xix. 12, literally, he emasculated himself. Judging from his subsequent course, I have no doubt he was made a better man by the operation, and that his conduct became more rational and less fanatical than it would otherwise have been. (p)

(o) Sometimes an early tendency to fanaticism is checked, either by a change in the physical system or from some other cause, and then, though subdued it gives firmness and perseverance to the character. This appears to have been the case with Ignatius Loyola, John Wesley, St. Teresa, Whitfield, Adam Clark, George Fox, &c. all of whom exhibited in early life, many fanatical propensities, such as desire for martyrdom—extreme fasting, &c. &c.

(p) Very numerous are the instances, in which nothing seemed wrong in the conduct, or calculated to detract from a reputation for piety, but the predominance of the sexual propensity. Dr. Gall has alluded to many such, as also, several other writers. There are some very striking instances given in "Mather's Magnalia," particularly the cases of Potter and of W. C.—vol. ii. p. 348 and 351.

*Of Flagellation.*

A religious society of Christians, called Flagellants, first arose in Italy in the year 1250, and afterwards spread over a large part of Europe. Something of the kind, however, prevailed in ancient times. At Sparta, a festival called *Diamastagosis*, was holden in honor of *Diana Orthia*, which received that name, because boys were whipped before the altar of the goddess. "These boys, called *Bomonicae*, were originally free-born Spartans; but, in the more delicate ages, they were of mean birth, and generally of a slavish origin. This operation was performed by an officer, in a severe and unfeeling manner; and that no compassion should be raised, the priest stood near the altar with a small light statue of the goddess, which suddenly became heavy and insupportable if the lash of the whip was more lenient or less rigorous. The parents of the children attended the solemnity, and exhorted them not to commit any thing, either by fear or groans, that might be unworthy of Laconian education. These flagellations were so severe, that the blood gushed in profuse torrents, and many expired under the lash of the whip without uttering a groan, or betraying any marks of fear. Such a death was reckoned very honorable, and the corpse was buried with much solemnity, with a garland of flowers on its head. The origin of this festival is unknown. Some suppose that *Lycurgus* first instituted it. *Orestes* first introduced that barbarous custom, after he had brought the statue of *Diana Taurica* into Greece. There is another tradition, which mentions that *Pausanias*, as he was offering prayers and sacrifices to the gods, before he engaged with *Mardonius*, was suddenly attacked by a number of *Lydians*, who

disturbed the sacrifice, and were at last repelled with staves and stones, the only weapons with which the Lacedemonians were provided at that moment. In commemoration of this, therefore, the whipping of boys was instituted at Sparta, and after that the Lydian procession."—[Lempriere's Classical Dict.—art. *Diamastagosis*.

But the most noted Flagellants have arisen since the Christian era, and as before said, appeared in Italy about the middle of the 13th century. "A great multitude of persons," says Mosheim, "of all ranks and ages, and both sexes, ran about the streets of cities and country towns, with whips in their hands, lashing miserably their naked bodies; and they expected, by this voluntary punishment, by their frightful countenances and their distracted cries, to procure the divine compassion for themselves and others." But at length they became so turbulent, that the Emperors and Pontiffs issued decrees to put a stop to this religious phrenzy.

After having been long restrained, they publicly appeared again in the 14th century, and produced greater excitements than before. Their re-appearance was also in Italy, in the neighborhood of Cremona. Suddenly a multitude, amounting to ten thousand persons, claiming the authority of a letter or writing sent down from heaven, issued from the surrounding cities and villages, and paraded the country, flogging themselves, and (in the first instance) begging. "The contagion spread with a rapidity which will afflict, but cannot surprise, the observer of religious absurdities; and in the course of ten years scarcely a country in Europe was exempt from its visitation. As they increased in numbers, they adopted some sort of system and method in their fanaticism;

which, though it may have varied under different circumstances, possessed the same general character. Naked from their loins upward, and marked on their front and back with red crosses, they spread themselves in numerous bands over the face of Europe. Twice every day, in the most public places, they performed their discipline, until blood flowed from their wounds; and they completed their duties by one nocturnal and private flagellation. Their appearance and character chiefly moved the enthusiasm of the Germans, who opened their doors, and entertained them at their tables. The innocence of their demeanor, the severity of their discipline, the very singularity of their enthusiasm, attracted a multitude of proselytes; but as their numbers increased, their conduct no longer escaped reproach, and the offences of individuals threw suspicion and obloquy on the whole body. By thirty-three consecutive days of flagellation, they held themselves absolved from the most heinous sins, to the disregard of the salutary penance and indulgences of the Church. And lastly they maintained that stripes were more honorable than martyrdom; that the baptism by water had passed away, and given place to the baptism by blood; and that through this last alone, was there any road to salvation. At length they attracted the attention of the public authorities, and a dreadful persecution of them commenced, till finally, Pope Clement VI. proclaimed a holy war; the master of the Teutonic order marched against them; and after a solemn fast and public prayer, that God would aid him in the extirpation of His enemies, for the glory of His Holy name, he assaulted them and massacred eight thousand; the remainder, about two thousand more, were

carried away captive into Prussia, that they might be restored, by second baptism, to the bosom of the Church.

But notwithstanding all this, they were found again in Germany, and particularly in Thuringia and Lower Saxony, in the very next century. But they had become more orderly, though they condemned as useless most of the ceremonies required by the Romish Church, and founded all their hopes of salvation on faith and flagellation.

Something of this practice has lately been revived in the State of New York, and for aught we know, may be continued at the present time; though it was there resorted to for a different purpose. People did not flagellate themselves, in this case, but parents practiced whipping their children, as a religious duty, to make them, (as they termed it,) "submit themselves to God." It prevailed in Oneida county, in that State, in 1832, though I cannot believe to any considerable extent. It was several times alluded to about that period, in the "Journal and Telegraph," a Calvinistic religious paper published at Albany, the editors of which paper, state that "the fact is susceptible of ample proof." The chief details I have seen respecting the practice, are contained in a letter from the venerable and Rev. Henry Davis, D. D., late President of Hamilton College, in the western part of the State of New York. The letter was published in the Journal and Telegraph of June 1st, 1833.

Dr. Davis states that it is true that such a practice has prevailed in Oneida county. He refers to a pious lady who said "she had used this method (whipping) with all (or some) of her own children, and had *brought them in*,"—(meaning hereby that she had *converted* them,)—and "that one of them she whipped three times be-

fore she succeeded in doing it." One other pious lady, stated that she whipped her daughter, then 13 years of age, with a corset board, for this purpose; and that to this course she was urged by another pious woman, who lent her the instrument of flagellation. It should be added in justice to these pious women, that according to Dr. Davis, their efforts were successful, and the girl, after this treatment, "promised to submit to God." (q)

Dr. Davis says further in his letter, that a Reverend clergyman of the Oneida Presbytery—"a man who has been regarded as possessing more than ordinary talents with unquestionable piety and discretion, and whose praise is in all the churches, was asked by a lady, in his presence,—“What do you think, sir, of the practice of whipping children, to induce them to promise to give themselves to God?” He replied—"I think there is much to be said in favor of it. We whip our children, to induce them to submit to our authority. They are rendered kind, affectionate and obedient by it. Submission to God, is the same in kind. Both are of a moral nature. Why not use the same means in both cases to produce the same effect? Solomon says—‘foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.’”

How considerable may have been the influence and effect of such arguments and observations, from clergy-

(q) "A missionary at Maopongo having met one of the queens, and finding her mind inaccessible to all his instructions, determined to use sharper remedies, and, seizing a whip, began to apply it to her majesty's person. The effect he describes as most auspicious; every successive blow opened her eyes more and more to the truth, and she at length declared herself wholly unable to resist such affecting arguments in favor of the Catholic doctrine."—[Narrative of Discovery and Adventure in Africa," by Hugh Murray, Esq.]

men of "unquestionable piety and discretion," in continuing and extending the very reprehensible practice of whipping children until they "promise to submit to God," I do not know. I am pleased, however, to see from Dr. Davis's account, that some women hesitated about resorting to it. He mentions one woman who, on being urged to adopt this new process of conversion, replied that "she must have more *light* before she could do so." (r)

This subject gives me occasion again to remark on the extreme importance of guarding against the first introduction of any fanatical proceedings. Thus when it is announced as it is now days, that varied and new methods are to be tried to convert men, and that all are to study to devise some new means for this purpose, and when it is considered abundant proof of the utility of such measures that people become excited and profess or really believe that they have been converted by these new means and become regenerate, then extreme caution must be used—then must enlightened reason be consulted, and the plain precepts of Christianity be observ-

(r) It would have been curious to know what this woman would have considered "*light*," sufficient to have induced her to resort to this method. Would it have sufficed, for her to have been assured, that in numerous cases, where it was tried, children, after or during the operation, had promised to "submit to God?" I fear it would. On this subject, it may not be improper to state that flagellation often has very singular effects. The Abbe Boileau, in his "*Histoire des Flagellans*," says it is not exempt from the charge of producing disorder of manners. One effect of flagellation is to increase the sensibility of the skin, and an increased sensibility in some parts of the body, by sympathetic communications may arouse sensibility in another part, where it ought to remain dormant. This fact seems to have been known to Jean Henri Meibomius, who wrote a learned work, *de flagrarum usu in re venerea*, published in 1648, with this motto—

"Delicias pariunt Veneri crudelia flagra;

Dum nocet, illa juvat; jum juvat, ecce nocet.

ed, or there will be danger of an overwhelming influx of delusion and fanaticism.

*Of wounding the body by cutting instruments.*

Wounding or cutting the body, has been often resorted to as a religious exercise. This was the custom of the prophets of Baal ; as we read—1st Kings, xviii. 28, —“They cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them.” It is probable that something like this was practised by the Hebrews, as in Leviticus, xix. 28, it is written—“Ye shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor print any marks upon you.”

Plutarch, in his book “De Superstitione,” tells us that the priests of Bellona, when they sacrificed to that goddess, were wont to besmear the victim with their own blood. The Persian magi, according to Herodotus, used to appease tempests and allay the winds, by making incisions in their flesh. They who carried about the Syrian goddess, as Apudius relates, among other mad pranks, were ever now and then cutting and slashing themselves with knives, till the blood gushed out ; and even to this day, in Turkey, Persia and in several parts of India, there are certain fanatics, who think they do a very meritorious service, and highly acceptable to the Deity, by cutting and mangling their own flesh. So also certain of the Dervises, under the excitement produced by their religious ceremonies, slash most unmercifully their sides, arms and legs, with swords, cutlasses and other instruments. The custom in this instance, however, seems to have been recently abolished. Commodore Porter, in his “Letters from Constantinople,” after

describing the ceremony of circumcision which he witnessed there, says he saw at the mosque of the jumping Dervishes,—“around and about the altar, a multitude of instruments of torture, such as whips, scourges of iron, chains, sharp iron spikes, rusty daggers, knives, swords, axes and hatchets, with which they formerly tortured themselves as well as one another, but *latterly the Sultan has forbidden the practice.*” This is one of the many improvements effected by that extraordinary man, Sultan Mahmoud.

Strabo alludes to the practice of the Etruscan priests tearing their own flesh, and cutting themselves in different parts of the body, and of walking on fire.

Under this head also, I should place the practices of the Hindoos, and particularly those in honor of Shivu, the destroyer. These are falling on iron spikes, piercing the tongue and the sides, swinging by hooks fastened into their flesh, &c. The following picture, from Ward, will suffice.

“This god (Shivur) is represented in various ways; sometimes as a silver colored man, with five faces; sometimes with three eyes, and one face. Another image of this deity, is the *lingu*, which is nothing more than a smooth black stone, in the form of a sugar loaf. This is often made of clay, for extemporaneous use.

“An abominable festival in honor of this god is celebrated; when many Hindoos, assuming the name of sunyasees, inflict on themselves, the greatest cruelties. On the first day of the festival, these sunyasees, cast themselves from a bamboo stage, with three resting places, the highest about twenty feet from the ground. From this height these persons cast themselves on iron spikes, stuck in bags of straw. These spikes are laid in

a reclining posture, and when the person falls, they almost constantly fall down, instead of entering his body. There are instances, however, of persons being killed, and others wounded, but they are very rare. A few years ago, a person at Kideerpooru, near Calcutta, cast himself on a knife used in cleaning fish, which entered his side and caused his death. He threw himself from the stage, twice on the same day, the second time, (which was fatal,) to gratify a woman with whom he lived. In some villages, several of these stages are erected, and as many as two or three hundred people cast themselves on these spikes, in one day, in the presence of great crowds of people. The worshippers of Shivu make a great boast of the power of their god, in preserving his followers in circumstances of such danger.

“The next morning early, the work of piercing the tongues and sides commences. In the year 1806, I went to Kaleeghatu, in company with two or three friends, to witness these practices; at which place we arrived about five o'clock in the morning. We overtook numerous companies who were proceeding thither, having with them drums, and other instruments of music; also spits, canes, and different articles to pierce their tongues and sides. Some with tinkling rings on their ancles were dancing, and exhibiting indecent gestures as they passed along, while others rent the air with the sounds of their filthy songs. As we entered the village where the temple of this great goddess is situated, the crowds were so great, that we could with difficulty get our vehicles along, and at last were completely blocked up. We then alighted and went amongst the crowd. But who can describe a scene like this? Here, men of all ages, who intended to have their tongues pierced, or

their sides bored, were buying garlands of flowers to hang around their necks, or to tie round their heads—there, others were carrying offerings to the goddess; above the heads of the crowd were seen nothing but the feathers belonging to the great drums, and the instruments of torture which each victim was carrying in his hand. These wretched slaves of superstition were distinguished from others by the quantity of oil rubbed on their bodies, and by streaks and dots of mud all over them. Some of the chief men belonging to each company were covered with ashes, or dressed in a most fantastic manner, like the fool among mountebanks. For the sake of low sport, some were dressed as English women, and others had on a hat to excite the crowd to laugh at Europeans. As soon as we could force our way, we proceeded to the temple of Kalee, where the crowd, inflamed to madness, almost trampled upon one another, to obtain a sight of the idol. We went up to the door-way, when a bramhun, who was one of the owners of the idol, addressed one of my companions in broken English:—‘Money—money—for black mother!’ My friend, not much liking the looks of his black mother, declared he should give her nothing. From this spot, we went into the temple yard, where two or three blacksmiths had begun the work of piercing the tongues and boring the sides of these infatuated disciples of Shivu. The first man seemed reluctant to hold out his tongue, but the blacksmith, rubbing it with something like flour, and having a piece of cloth betwixt his fingers, laid firm hold, dragged it out, and placing his lancet under it in the middle, pierced it through and let the fellow go. The next person whose tongue we saw cut, directed the blacksmith to cut it on the contrary side, as it had been

already cut twice. This man seemed to go through the business of having his tongue slit, with perfect sang froid. The company of natives were entirely unmoved, and the blacksmith, pocketing the trifling fee given by each for whom he did this favor, laughed at the sport. I could not help asking whether they were not punishing these men for lying. After seeing the operation performed on one or two more, we went to another group, where they were boring the sides. The first we saw undergoing this operation, was a boy, who might be twelve or thirteen years old, and who had been brought thither by his elder brother to submit to this cruelty. A thread rubbed with clarified butter, was drawn through the skin on each side, with a kind of lancet having an eye like a needle. He did not flinch, but hung by his hands over the shoulders of his brother. I asked a man who had just had his sides bored, why he did this? He said he had made a vow to Kalee at a time of dangerous illness, and was now performing this vow. A bye-stander added, it was an act of holiness or merit. Passing from this group, we saw a man dancing backwards and forwards, with two canes run through his sides, as thick as a man's little finger. In returning to Calcutta, we saw many with things of different thicknesses thrust through their sides and tongues, and several with the pointed handles of shovels, containing fire, sticking in their sides. Into this fire, every now and then, they threw Indian pitch, which for the moment blazed very high. I saw one man whose singular mode of self-torture struck me much. His breast, arms, and other parts of his body, were entirely covered with pins, as thick as nails or packing needles. This is called vanu-phora—(piercing with arrows.) The person had made a vow to Shivu thus to

pierce his body, praying the god to remove some evil from him.

“On the following day, in the afternoon, the ceremony called Churuku, or the swinging by hooks fastened in the back, is performed. The posts are erected in some open place in the town or suburbs. They are generally fifteen, twenty or twenty-five cubits high. In some places a kind of worship is paid at the foot of the tree of Shivu, when two pigeons are let loose, or slain. In other parts, i. e. in the neighborhood of Calcutta, the worship of Shivu is performed at his temple, after which the crowd proceed to the swinging posts, and commence the horrid work of torture. The man who is to swing prostrates himself before the tree, and a person, with his dusty fingers, makes a mark where the hooks are to be put. Another person immediately gives him a smart slap on the back, and pinches up the skin hard with his thumb and fingers, while another thrusts the hook through, taking hold of about an inch of the skin. The other hook is then in like manner put through the skin of the other side of the neck, and the man gets up on his feet. As he is rising, some water is thrown in his face. He then mounts on a man's back, or is elevated in some other way, and the strings which are attached to the hooks in his back are tied to the rope at one end of the horizontal bamboo, and the rope at the other end is held by several men, who, drawing it down, raise up the end on which the man swings, and by their running round with the rope, the machine is turned. In swinging, the man describes a circle of about thirty feet diameter. Some swing only a few minutes, others half an hour or more. I have heard of men who continued swinging for hours. In the southern parts of Bengal, a

piece of cloth is wrapped round the body underneath the hooks, lest the flesh should tear and the wretch fall and be dashed to pieces, but the whole weight of the body rests on the hooks. Some of these persons take the wooden pipe, and smoke while swinging, as though insensible of the least pain. Others take up fruit in their hands, and either eat it or throw it among the crowd. I have heard of a person's having a monkey's collar run through his flank, in which state the man and the monkey whirled round together. On one occasion, in the north of Bengal, a man took a large piece of wood in his mouth, and swung for a considerable time without any cloth round his body to preserve him, should the flesh of his back tear. On some occasions, these sunyasees have hooks run through their thighs as well as backs. About the year 1800, five women swung in this manner, with hooks through their backs and thighs, at Kidurpooru, near Calcutta. It is not very uncommon for the flesh to tear, and the person to fall; instances are related of such persons perishing on the spot. A few years ago a man fell from the post at Kidurpooru, while whirling round with great rapidity; and, falling on a poor woman who was selling parched rice, killed her on the spot: the man died the next day. At a village near Bujbuj, some years since, the swing fell and broke a man's leg. The man who was upon it, as soon as he was loosed, ran to another tree, was drawn up, and whirled round again, as though nothing had happened. I have heard of one man's swinging three times in one day on different trees; and a bramhun assured me, that he had seen four men swing on one tree, and while swinging, this tree was carried round the field by the crowd."

*Stiffness and Anchylosis of the Joints from Religious Ceremonies.*

Travellers among the Hindoos, frequently meet with devotees and religious mendicants, who have become stiff in their joints from long continuance in one posture. Some of the Faquirs continue for life in one posture; some never lie down; some have always their arms raised above their heads; and some mangle their bodies with knives and scourges. The town of Tangrenate, in Hindostan, is frequented by pilgrims, some of them from the distance of 300 leagues, which they travel, not by walking or riding, but by measuring the road with the length of their bodies, in which method of locomotion some of them consume years before they complete their pilgrimage. Mr. Ward saw a young man, who had held up his arm till it had become stiff. This young man and his companion were covered with ashes, and were without clothing, except the bark of some tree, and a shred of cloth drawn up between the legs. He told Mr. W. that he had held up his arm in this manner, three years. His manner of life was curious, showing in the clearest manner, the extreme power of the religious sentiment, and in a hot climate, where undoubtedly this sentiment is the most powerful. "After rising in the morning," says Mr. Ward, "he repeats the name of some god, using his bead-roll; he then performs the ceremonies of worship before some representative of an idol; then bathes, and goes through the ceremonies (sundhya) ordained by the shastra to be performed three times a day; then he prepares the offerings, worships his idol, and again repeats its name for some

time. At mid-day he eats ; then returns to the repetition of the name of his god, till the evening sandhya ; and after this he continues repeating the name of the idol till he falls asleep."

Something like this occurred among Christians, in the fifth century. The following details are found in Mosheim, vol. i. p. 410—11.

"It is incredible, what rigorous and severe laws the *Mystics* imposed on themselves, in order to appease God, and deliver the celestial spirit from the bondage of this mortal body. To live among wild beasts, nay in the *manner* of these beasts ; to roam about like madmen, in desert places, and without garments ; to feed their emaciated bodies with hay and grass ; to shun the converse and even the sight of men ; to stand motionless in certain places, for many years exposed to the weather ; to shut themselves up in confined cabins, till life ended ;—this was accounted piety ; this, the true method of eliciting the [spark of] deity from the secret recesses of the soul. The greater part of these people were influenced, not so much by arguments and assignable reasons, as by either a natural propensity to melancholy and austerity, or by the example and opinion of others. For there are diseases of the mind, as well as of the body, which can spread like a pestilence. Yet there were some, who gave systematic precepts for this austere mode of living ; for instance, among the Latins, Julianus Pomerius, in his three books, *de vita contemplativa* ; and among the Syrians, many whose names it would be needless to mention.

"Among these examples of religious fatuity, none acquired greater veneration and applause, than those who were called *Pillar-Saints* (*Sancti-Columnares*),

or in Greek, Stylites ; persons of a singular spirit and genius, who stood motionless on the tops of lofty columns, during many years, and to the end of life, to the great astonishment of the ignorant multitude. The author of this institution in the present (fifth) century, was *Simeon*, of Sisan, a Syrian ; who was first a shepherd and then a monk ; and who, in order to be nearer heaven, spent thirty-seven years in the most uncomfortable manner, on the tops of five different pillars of six, twelve, twenty-two, thirty-six, and forty cubits elevation ; and in this way, procured for himself immense fame and veneration."

A note added to this account from Mosheim, by his translator, Dr. Murdock, is so curious as to entitle it to a place here.

" This Simeon, we are told, was born at Sisan, in Syria, about A. D. 390. At the age of 13, while tending his father's sheep, he heard a public exposition of Luke vi. 21, 25 ; (' Blessed are ye that weep now, &c. But wo unto you that laugh now, &c. ') which determined him to become a monk. Having therefore passed a novitiate of two years, he removed to a monastery near Antioch, where he lived ten years. Here his abstinence and his voluntary mortifications were so excessive, as to draw on him censure from the other monks. He once swathed himself, from his loins to his neck, with a rigid well rope of palm, during ten days, which caused his whole body to fester and discharge blood. Being expelled the monastery for such austerities, he retired to the adjacent mountain, and let himself down into a dry cave. After five days, the repenting monks sought him out, drew him forth from the cavern, and restored him to their fellowship. But not long after, he retired to a

little cell, at the foot of a mountain near Antioch, and there immured himself three years. During this period, having caused his den to be stopped up with earth, he remained buried for forty days, without eating or drinking; and when disinterred, was found nearly dead. So pleased was he with this experiment, that he afterwards kept such a fast annually, as long as he lived. He next removed to the top of the mountain, where he chained himself to a rock, for several years. His fame had now become very great, and crowds of admiring visiters, of all ranks and characters, thronged around him. He instructed them, healed their diseases, and converted heretics, pagans and Jews, in great numbers. Incommoded by the pressure of the crowd, he erected a pillar on which he might stand; elevated at first, six cubits; then 12, 22, 36; and at last 40 cubits. The top of the pillar was three feet in diameter, and surrounded with a balustrade. Here he stood, day and night, and in all weathers. Through the night, and till 9 A. M. he was constantly in prayer, often spreading forth his hands, and bowing so low that his forehead touched his toes. A bystander once attempted to count the number of these successive prostrations; and he counted till they amounted to 1244. At 9 o'clock, A. M. he began to address the admiring crowd below, to hear and answer their questions, to send messages and write letters, &c., for he took concern in the welfare of all the churches, and corresponded with bishops and even with emperors. Towards evening he suspended his intercourse with this world, and betook himself again to converse with God, till the following day. He generally ate but once a week; never slept; wore a long sheepskin robe, and a cap of the same. His beard was

very long, and his frame extremely emaciated. In this manner he is reported to have spent 37 years; and at last, in his 69th year, to have expired unobserved, in a praying attitude, in which no one ventured to disturb him, till after three days; when *Antony*, his disciple and biographer, mounting the pillar, found that his spirit was departed, and his holy body was emitting a delightful odor. His remains were borne, in great pomp, to Antioch, in order to be the safeguard of that un-walled town, and innumerable miracles were performed at his shrine. His pillar, also, was so venerated, that it was literally enclosed with chapels and monasteries, for some ages. *Simeon* was so averse from women, that he never allowed one to come within the sacred precincts of his pillar. Even his own mother was debarred this privilege, till after her death, when her corpse was brought to him; and he now restored her to life, for a short time, that she might see him and converse with him a little before she ascended to heaven. Such is the story, gravely told us by the greatest writers of that age; and as gravely repeated, in modern times, by the Catholic historians."

This *Simeon* became the founder of a sect of fanatics called "Holy birds" and "ærial martyrs," who peopled a long time the columns of the East, and continued this ridiculous form of religion so late as the twelfth century. Some ceremonies peculiar to the Roman Catholics, I think, must be painful, and sometimes injurious to the body. When at Rome, in 1829, I saw near the Basilica of S. Giovanni, the Scala Santa, or holy stairs, which at that time were covered with devotees of both sexes, slowly, and I thought painfully ascending on

their knees, occasionally kissing the steps and saying prayers. These stairs consist of twenty-eight steps, and are said to have once belonged to the palace of Pontius Pilate, at Jerusalem.

## CHAPTER III.

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### OF AUSTERITIES, PENANCES, MONACHISM, FASTING, &C.

THE subjects treated of in this chapter, are eminently deserving the profound meditation of the philosopher and the physician. I shall not, however, inquire minutely into the probable causes, which have led devout men in all ages, and of all religions, to seek the favor of the Deity by seclusion from social life, by abstemiousness and fasting, and by numerous other penances. Whether it is natural to man in certain stages of civilization, to believe the Deity to be a malevolent being, delighted with the misery of his creatures, and demanding of them a worship influenced by fear, I shall not inquire. It is sufficient for my purpose to show the fact, that men in all ages have sought the favor of the Deity by severe penances and austerities, by extreme fasting, and by solitude and contemplation.

#### *Of Monachism.*

It is a well established fact that extreme temperance may be easily borne, and is often necessary for the enjoyment of health in hot climates, and no doubt such climates, by producing lassitude of the body, disposes people to contemplation.

Mosheim remarks that "a propensity to austerity and gloom, is a disease under which many labor, in Syria, Egypt, and other provinces of the East;" and Waddington says, "The monastic spirit was alike congenial to the scenery and climate of the East, and to the peculiar character of the inhabitants: vast solitudes of unbroken and unbounded expanse; rocks, with the most grotesque outlines, abounding in natural excavations; a dry air and an unclouded sky, afforded facilities—might we not say temptations—to a wild, unsocial and contemplative life. The serious enthusiasm of the natives of Egypt and Asia, that combination of indolence with energy; of the calmest languor with the fiercest passion, which marks their features and their actions, disposed them to embrace with eagerness the tranquil but exciting duties of religious seclusion. And thus, even in earlier ages, before the zeal of devotion superseded all other motives to retirement, we observe, without any surprise, the mention of that practice, as indigenious and immemorial."

Something of this spirit, however, has been exhibited in all countries and all climates, and my object in alluding to the conduct to which it has given rise, is to point out the influence it has upon the health of mankind; leaving the political economist to show the injury a country must sustain by having a large portion of the population idle, and devoted to celibacy.

I consider this spirit to be an effect of the Religious Sentiment, which impels men to flee society and to give themselves up to devotion, and by bodily suffering, seek to render themselves more pure and acceptable to the Deity.

As I have said, all countries and all religions have

furnished numerous instances of the kind. Such were the Gymnosophists or Brachmans of India and Hindostan, a name given to them because they usually went naked. They made philosophy or religion to consist in severe ascetic habits, and constant meditation, in order, as they said, to overcome their sensual propensities, and to become united to God. So desirous were they of purifying themselves, and of being disencumbered of their bodies, which they regarded as impure, that they often burned themselves alive, to become pure the sooner.

Such were also the Bonzes and Talapoins, priests of Fo in China and the East Indies. These devotees resemble in their habits and customs, the Christian monks, and like them, live in monasteries.

The Dervises, among the Mahometans, seem also to be actuated by the same religious spirit, and resemble the Monks of modern times and Christian countries.

Such were also the ancient Essenes and the Therapeuta, of India, Syria and Egypt. These existed before Christ, and are described by Philo, Josephus and Pliny, from whose writings all subsequent accounts of them have been derived. Some Roman Catholic writers, however, have asserted, on the authority of Eusebius, (s) that the Therapeuta were Christians, and that,

(s) Eusebius says that the Therapeutics of Judea and Egypt were Christian solitaires of the first century, and had their rules from St. Mark. But as it will be seen from Philo, this is incorrect. It should, however, be considered that many of them became Christians, and still adhering to their former customs, might, and probably did, introduce Monachism among Christians. They might also plead, that though this system existed in the time of Christ, he did not condemn it; though the censure of the Pharisees may well apply to the practices of the Essenes and Therapeutics. He who wishes to obtain a correct understanding of the ceremonies which have been connected with Christianity, should commence with the History of the Jews and of other nations, in the century preceding Christ, and learn

therefore, Monachism was derived from Christianity. But such is not the fact as regards the Therapeuta. They were Jews by birth and religion, and were known before Christ. But I have no doubt that their doctrines and example gave rise and encouragement to Monachism among Christians, and that they have exerted a baneful influence on the Christian church, even to the present day ; for it cannot be denied that some notions respecting the necessity of rendering ourselves more acceptable to the Deity, by some kind of bodily suffering, are yet prevalent among Christians. Hence arises the opinion that fasting and other penances are acceptable to him. Surely those who hold to these opinions, and practice accordingly, cannot believe that an upright heart and sound morality are the essence of religion, and that to “ cease to do evil, and learn to do well,” is all that our Creator requires. The guilt supposed to have been contracted by Adam’s fall, as held by the Jansenists and others, has also contributed to perpetuate the opinion that punishing the body by abstinence, and other mortifications, was a Christian duty.

Believing, as I have said, that the opinion which has greatly prevailed, and does now, to some extent, in the Christian church, that bodily suffering is acceptable to the Deity, was mostly derived from the Essenes and Therapeutics, I have thought proper to give a more full account of them, and therefore transcribe the remarks of Philo respecting them.

“ Having spoken of the Essenes that lead a practical

the laws, religions and customs then prevalent. By this means, he will be enabled to see that many ceremonies were introduced into Christian worship, which had existed previous to Christ’s appearance, and derive no sanction from his practice or his precepts.

life, I come next to treat of those who embrace the contemplative. The men among them are called Therapeuta, and the women Therapeutides, agreeable to their profession, either as they profess the art of physic, (not that commonly practised; whereby the bodies of men are cured, but a much more valuable physic, whereby they cure the souls of men of diseases much more obstinate, difficult and harder to be removed, those which they have brought upon themselves by voluptuousness, concupiscence, grief, fears, covetousness, follies, injustice, and by an innumerable company of other passions and vices,) or else they have this name, because they have learned from the law of nature, and the sacred laws of the Holy Scriptures, to worship and revere that Being, which is better than good, more uncompounded than the number of one, and more ancient than unity itself.

“They that enter into this Therapeutic profession, do not do it as led thereto by any prevailing custom, or by the persuasion of others, but being wholly drawn to it by a heavenly love, are under an enthusiastic impulse, in the same manner as the Bacchanals and Corybantes, in the celebration of their festivals, till they have attained to this their desired state of contemplation; and thereon, as if they had done with this mortal life, through their desire after that which is immortal and ever blessed, they relinquish all their worldly goods and possessions to their sons or their daughters, or their other relations, delivering to them the inheritance thereof by a voluntary choice; and if they have no relations, they then give them to their friends and acquaintance. And when they have thus divested themselves of all their worldly substance, as being now no longer withheld by an enticement, they flee from their homes without any more

looking back, leaving their brothers, their children, their wives, their parents, and all their kindred, how numerous soever, as also the society of their friends and countrymen, among whom they have been born and bred, because their conversation, should they still stay with them, would be a strong and powerful allurements to draw them away from this purpose.

“They do not leave one city to go to another, like miserable or wicked servants, who having obtained of those that own them to be sold to some other person, gain thereby only the change of masters, not the recovery of their liberty. For all cities, even those that are governed by the best laws, are full of tumult and trouble, which no one that hath addicted himself to this way of philosophy can afterwards bear. And therefore they rather choose to make their abode without the walls of cities, in gardens, and villages, and lone country habitations, seeking solitude, not out of an affected hatred to mankind, but for the avoiding of the mixing with men of different manners, knowing it to be unprofitable and hurtful.

“This sort of men are dispersed throughout many parts of the world, (for it is requisite that both Greeks and barbarians should partake of so excellent a benefit,) but Egypt abounds most with them throughout all its provinces, but most of all about Alexandria. But from all places the principal men of them retire, as into their own proper country, into a place which they have near the Lake Maria, situated upon a gentle rising hill, very commodious for them, both for its convenience in affording them there a safe dwelling, and also for the wholesomeness of its air. The houses of those who there come together, are built in a very frugal and mean man-

ner, they having their covering fitted only for two necessary things, that is, to keep them from the heat of the sun in summer, and from the cold of the air in winter : neither are they built near each other as in cities ; for this would be irksome and displeasing to men desiring and seeking after solitude : neither are they far asunder, because they love at times to converse together, and also that they may the easier unite for their mutual defence, if they should happen at any time to be invaded by thieves.

“ Each of them hath in this cottage a little chapel, which they call Semneum, or Monasterium, in which every one of them doth, alone by himself, perform all the mysteries of a holy life, bringing in thither, at no time, either drink or meat, or any other of the necessaries used for the support of the body, but only the law and the divine oracles of the prophets, and hymns, and such other like things, whereby knowledge and piety are increased and perfected. They have God in perpetual remembrance, so that, even in their dreams, nothing else but the beauties and excellencies of divine powers run in their fancies, insomuch that several of them, while they sleep, do in their dreams deliver many excellent sayings of divine philosophy.

“ Their constant usage is, to pray twice every day, that is, in the morning and in the evening. At the rising of the sun, they pray that God would give his blessing upon the day, that true blessing whereby their minds may be filled with heavenly light ; and at the setting of the sun, that their minds, being wholly disburdened of their senses, and all sensible things, may, in its retirements into itself, find out truth. All the interval of time, from morning to evening, they spend in

the study and contemplation of divine things. For exercising themselves in the most Holy Scriptures, they philosophize upon them after their country manner, expounding them allegorically. For they suppose, that the words are only notes and marks of some things of mystical nature, which are to be explained figuratively.

“They have among them the writings of some ancients, who, being principal leaders of their sect, have left them many monuments of that learning, which consists in dark and secret expressions, which they, using as original patterns, do imitate that way of study. And they do not only spend their time in contemplation, but they also compose songs and hymns in the praise of God, of all sorts of metre, and musical verses, which they write in grave and seemly rhymes.

“Six days of the week they thus continue apart by themselves in the little chapel above mentioned, and there give themselves wholly up to the contemplation of divine philosophy, without going out of doors, or as much as looking abroad all that time. On the seventh day, they meet together in a public solemn assembly, and there sit down together, according to their seniority, in a decent manner, with both their hands under their garments, that is, the right hand upon the part between their chin and their breast, and the left let down by their side. Then one of the best learned of them, standing forth, discourseth to them with a grave composed countenance, and a grave serious voice, speaking with reason and prudence, and not making ostentation of eloquence, as the rhetoricians and sophists now do, but searching into and expounding all things, with that exactness of thought, as that it doth not only for the present captivate the ears, but by being thus heard, enters into the soul,

and there makes lasting impressions upon it. While this person thus speaks, all the rest give attention with silence, expressing their approbation only with the motions of their eyes and their head.

“The synagogue, or common place of assembly, where they meet every seventh day, hath two distinct enclosures and apartments in it; the one assigned for the men, and the other for the women; for it is their custom, that the women that are of the same sect and institution, should also be auditors in these assemblies. The partition wall, which separates these two enclosures, is built up three or four cubits high from the ground, after the manner of a parapet, the rest lies open to the top of the room. All which is thus contrived for the sake of two conveniences; the first, to protect that decent modesty which is naturally belonging to the female sex; the other, that while they sit in that auditory, they may easily hear what is there discoursed, nothing coming between to hinder the voice of him that speaketh from reaching to them.

“Having laid temperance as a certain foundation in their souls, they build thereupon all other virtues. They take neither meat nor drink before sunset, for they hold it requisite to employ the day in the study of philosophy, and the night in the making of necessary provision for the body; so that they allot the whole day for the former, and only a small part of the night for the latter. Some of them, in whom is a more than ordinary thirst after knowledge, forget to take any sustenance for three days together, and others there are who are so delighted and fed with feasting on wisdom, which gives to them of its doctrine richly and plentifully, that they sometimes hold out double the time, and for six days

together scarce taste of any necessary food, being nourished, as they say a sort of grasshoppers are, by the air in which they live, the melody of their hymns, as I suppose, rendering the want of food easy and supportable unto them. They looking on the seventh day to be all holy and all festival, do think it worthy of extraordinary honor. On that day, after having first taken due care of their souls, they refresh and nourish their bodies, then relaxing to themselves their daily labor, as they do their working cattle. They eat not any thing that is sumptuous or dainty, but only coarse bread; their sauce is only salt, and they that are of a nice stomach, mingle some hyssop with it; their drink is only water from the river. And thus they appease the two domineering mistresses which nature hath subjected all mankind to, that is, hunger and thirst, offering nothing to gratify them but only what is necessary for the support of life; for they eat only to assuage hunger, and drink only to quench their thirst, avoiding fulness of stomach, as that which is hurtful both to soul and body.

“And whereas there are two sorts of coverings for the body, that is, house and clothes; as to their houses, it hath been spoken to before, that they are mean, and built without art, as made only to serve the present necessary uses: so likewise as to their clothes, they have only such as are most commodious to keep out cold and heat, they using for this purpose a thick coarse garment instead of furs in the winter, and a short coat without sleeves, or a linen vestment, in summer. They universally exercise themselves in modesty; and, looking on falsity to be the mother of arrogance, and truth to be the mother of modesty, they hold each of them to have the nature of a fountain; for there flow from falsity, say

they, many various sorts of evils, and from truth abundance of good, both human and divine."

But though neither Christ or his apostles, gave countenance to severe penances, abstinence or other austerities, or direction to flee the world and seek solitude and contemplation; yet very soon after they had left the world, such practices prevailed and were considered Christian duties. The Gnostics were one of the first sects that sought to modify the religion of Christ, or to blend it with the Oriental Philosophy. They taught that it was the ill fate of the soul to be united with a body, and that in order to give more freedom to the one, it was necessary to mortify the other; that the more the habitation of the soul was weakened and attenuated, the less power would it have to withdraw the mind from the contemplation of divine things.

According to Jerome, however, Paul, the hermit of Thabias, was the first Christian who renounced social life and lived in the desert. He was the author of the Institution of the Eremites. But, as Mosheim observes, "this mode of life prevailed among Christians long before Paul the hermit; in fact it was practised long before the Christian era, in Egypt, Syria, India and Mesopotamia, and it still exists among the Mohammedans, as well as the Christians, in those arid and burning climates. For the heated atmosphere which overspreads those countries, naturally disposes the inhabitants to repose and indolence, and to court solitude and melancholy."

In the same century, Ammonius Saccas endeavored to blend all sects and religions into one. He also taught his followers, by means of contemplation, to elevate their souls above all earthly things; and to weaken and

emaciate their bodies, which were hostile to the liberty of their souls, by means of hunger and thirst, and other austerities ; so that they might in the present life, attain to communion with the Supreme Being, and ascend, after death, active and unincumbered, to the universal Parent, and forever united with him.

“This new species of philosophy,” says Mosheim, “imprudently adopted by Origen and other Christians, did immense harm to christianity. For it led the teachers of it to involve in philosophic obscurity many parts of our religion, which were in themselves plain and easy to be understood ; and to add to the precepts of the Saviour not a few things, of which not a word can be found in the holy scriptures. It also produced that gloomy set of men, called *mystics* ; whose system, if divested of its Platonic notions respecting the origin and nature of the soul, will be a lifeless and senseless corpse. It laid a foundation, too, for that indolent mode of life, which was afterwards adopted by many, and particularly by numerous tribes of *monks* ; and it recommended to Christians various foolish and useless rites, suited only to nourish superstition, no small part of which we see religiously observed by many, even to the present day.”

In the *third century*, the doctrines of the mystics had great influence, causing numerous Christians to retire into deserts, and to give themselves to silence and inaction for the mortification and subjugation of the body, that the soul might be enabled to attain a better knowledge of divine things. Greater sanctity was now attributed to fasting, and it became the general belief that demons laid fewer snares for the abstemious and those who fared hard, than for the full-fed, or such as lived generously.

But in the early part of the *fourth century*, Christian Monachism may be considered to have been established. "About this time lived that fanatic who assumed the name and the character of *Dionysius the Areopagite*, the disciple of St. Paul; and who, under the cover of this shield, gave laws and instructions to those that wished to become separated from the world, and by means of contemplation to bring back the soul—that sundered particle of the divine nature—to its pristine state. As soon as the writings of this man passed into the hands of the Greeks and Syrians, and especially into those of the solitaries and monks, it is not easy to describe how much darkness spread over the minds of many, and what an increase of numbers there was among those who maintained that converse with God is to be had by mortifying the senses, withdrawing the thoughts from all external objects, subduing the body with hunger and hardships, and fixing the attention on God and eternal things, in a kind of holy indolence.

"The truth of these remarks is evinced by that vast multitude of monks and sacred virgins who spread themselves, as soon as peace was given to the Christians, with astonishing rapidity over the whole Christian world. Many persons of this description had long been known among the Christians, living as solitaries in the deserts of Egypt. Antony was the first, who in the year 305, collected them into an associated community in Egypt, and regulated their mode of living by fixed rules. His disciple *Hilarion*, the next year, undertook the same thing in Palestine and Syria. About the same time, *Aones*, or *Eugenius*, with his associates *Gaddana* and *Azyzo*, introduced this mode of life into Mesopotamia and the neighboring countries. These were imitated by

many others, with so much success, that in a short time all the East swarmed with persons who, abandoning the occupations and conveniences of life and all intercourse with society, pined away amidst various hardships, hunger and sufferings, in order to attain to a more close communion with God and the angels. The Christian church would have remained free from these numerous tortures of the mind and body, had not that great and fascinating doctrine of the ancient philosophy gained credence among Christians, that, to attain the happiness and communion with God, the soul must be freed from the influence of the body, and for this purpose, the body must be subdued.

“ This austere discipline passed from the East into the West, and first into Italy and the adjacent islands, though it is uncertain who conveyed it thither. Afterwards, *St. Martin*, the celebrated bishop of Tours, erected some monasteries in Gaul, and by his example and his discourses produced such eagerness to embrace a monastic life, that two thousand monks are said to have assembled together at his funeral. From thence, this way of life extended over the other countries of Europe. Those, however, who would acquaint themselves with these matters, should know, that there has always been a wide difference between the monks of the West, and those of the East; and that the former could never be brought to bear the severe rules, to which the latter voluntarily submitted. For, our part of the world is not so filled with persons who are by nature sour, morose, delirious, and fanatical, as those oriental regions are; nor will our bodies endure that abstemiousness in regard to nourishment, which those will which were born under a dry and burning atmosphere. It was therefore rather

the name and the shadow of that solitary life which *Antony* and others instituted in the East, than the thing itself, which was brought into the countries of Europe. (t)

These monks were not all of the same kind; for first, they were divided into *Cænobites* and *Eremites*. The former lived and ate together in the same house, and were associated under a leader and head, whom they called *Father*, or in the Egyptian tongue, *Abbot*. The latter, the *Eremites*, led a cheerless, solitary life, in certain parts of the country, dwelling in hovels, among the wild beasts. Still more austere than the *Eremites*, were those who were called *Anchorites*. These lived in

(t) Abstaining from meat and living wholly on vegetables, is very difficult for the people of cold countries, and is perhaps injurious to them. The reformation of Luther, was no doubt aided by the general wish of a northern people to rid themselves of severe rules of abstinence. Thus it has happened that it never made much progress in the hot countries, as in Spain and Italy. In these last countries, the rigid observances required by the priesthood are easily submitted to, but not so in cold countries. This difference between the oriental and the occidental monks, as to their mode of living, and the cause of it, are pleasantly noticed by *Sulpitius Severus*, Dial. i. de Vita Martini, c. 2, p. 65. ed. Verona. One of the interlocutors, having described the dry and sparing diet of the Egyptian monks, *Sulpitius* turned to his Gallic friend, and said: "How would you like a bunch of herbs and half a loaf, as a dinner for five men?" He, reddening a little on being so rallied, replied: "You are at your old practice, *Sulpitius*, for you neglect no opportunity that occurs, to tax us [Gallic monks] with voracity. But it is cruel in you, to require us Gauls to live in the manner of angels. But let that Cyrenian [monk] content himself with such a dinner, since it is his necessity or nature to go hungry. We, as I have often told you, are Gauls." In the same dialogue, cap. 4, p. 69, 70, he taxes *Jerome* with accusing the monks of edacity, and goes on to say: "I perceive that he refers rather to the oriental monks, than to the occidental; for edacity in the Greeks [and orientals,] is gluttony; in the Gauls it is nature." Immediately, therefore, on the introduction of the monastic institution into Europe, the occidental monks differed widely from the oriental in their customs and mode of living, and were taxed by them with voraciousness and gluttony.

desert places, with no kind of shelter ; fed on roots and plants, and had no fixed residence, but lodged wherever night overtook them, so that visitors might not know where to find them. The last class of monks were the *Vagrants*, called by the Egyptians *Sarabaitæ*, who roamed about the provinces, and from city to city, and got their living without labor, by pretended miracles, by trafficking in relics, and by other impositions. Among the *Cænobites*, many were vicious and profligate ; but not so many as among the *Sarabaites*, most of whom were knaves and villains. Of the *Eremites*, the greater part were delirious fanatics, who were not in their right mind. All these monks were hitherto *laymen*, or separated from the clerical order, and under the care and protection of the bishops. But many of them were now admitted into the rank of *clergymen*, even by the command of the emperors ; and so great was their reputation for sanctity, that bishops were often chosen from among them."

The original monks of Egypt have ever been considered by Roman Catholic writers, as the true models of monastic perfection. Their number was exceedingly great, amounting at times to one half the population. The life that many of them led was one of constant toil and suffering, and, according to their own statements, from the most pious, even if mistaken views. " We are not destitute of parental consolation, (said the hermit Abraham, who belonged to the class of Anchorets of Egypt, about the year 400,) nor devoid of means of easy sustenance, were we not bound by the command of our Saviour to forsake all and follow him. We are able, if it seemed good, to build our cells on the banks of the Nile, instead of bringing our water on our heads from

four miles' distance, were it not that the apostle has told us, that 'every man shall receive his reward according to his labor.' We know that in these our regions there are some secret and pleasant places, where fruits are abundant, and the beauty and fertility of the gardens would supply our necessities with the slightest toil, were it not that we fear 'to receive in our life-time our good things.' Wherefore we scorn these things, and all the pleasures of this world; and we take delight in these horrors, and prefer the wildness of this desolation, before all that is fair and attractive, admitting no comparison between the luxuriance of the most exuberant soil, and the bitterness of these sands. (*u*)

Monkery continued to increase, and in the sixth century, says Mosheim, "whole armies of monks might have been enrolled, without any sensible diminution of the number any where. In the west, this mode of life had patrons and followers without number." A Spanish author states that he counted in Spain, 47,000 abbeys, 40,000 priories, and 14,000 convents, and that none of them had less than 300, and some of them 800 persons. The manners of these religious recluses were singular enough. All of them were bound to submit to severe rules of diet, and some of them lived lives of excessive

(*u*) Such conduct, and for such reasons, seems now to us, very ridiculous; yet even at the present time, we see those professing to be Christians, contradicting Christ, by making his yoke severe, and his burden heavy. "I should advise any congregation, who are calculating to have a circle of parties, in the mean time to dismiss their minister, and let *him* go and preach where the people would be ready to receive the word and profit by it, and not have him stay and be distressed, and grieved, and killed, by attempting to promote religion among them, while they are engaged heart and hand in the service of the devil."—[Rev. Charles G. Finney's 13th Lecture on Revivals of Religion.]

and dangerous abstemiousness. St. Hillarion ate but five figs in a day, and often fasted four entire days. Some passed the nights out of doors, and most of them were obliged to rise at or before sunrise, to pray. The doctrines they taught were not only absurd but dangerous to health and life. They highly prized martyrdom, many longed for it, and sought it in various ways, and all had recourse to some measures to produce bodily suffering. St. Ephraim taught that it was necessary to flee from all gayety and laughter forever, and to live perpetually in fear of hell, both day and night. "Man being a criminal," said St. John Climaque, "ought to tremble continually in the presence of the eternal and terrible Judge." This same author says, old men who had lived in monasteries eighty years, and submitted to the severe rules enjoined, had become greatly perfected, and were brought to a state of infancy in mind, which was called a holy simplicity.

The doctrine was zealously inculcated, that it was necessary to abandon parents and homes for this kind of life. St. Thomas abandoned his wife and children in poverty, to live in solitude. When St. Basil was told that the Scriptures taught to honor parents, he said, that was addressed to the people of the world, not to those who had renounced it.

These devout men sought unhealthy places to live in, and called it exposing themselves for God. "Sickness," says one of them, "appears to be natural to the Christian. The religious man ought to consume himself like a candle for the light of mankind." Their missionaries were urged to, and did seek out the most barbarous cannibals, and there exposed their lives, with the cross in their hands. Never were greater sacrifices, or more dar-

ing exposures of life, made by religious men, than by the missionaries of that time. St. Bernard prided himself and congratulated his followers, that since they had given themselves up entirely to religious duties, they had feeble stomachs and were sickly; and quoted St. Paul, (2 Cor. xii. 10,) as an example—a similar instance.

St. Ambrose taught that the precepts of physicians were contrary to celestial science. “They, (said he,) are opposed to long fasts and long watchfulness, and condemn continual prayer, but whoever follows them will lose himself. Hippocrates and his followers taught to preserve life, but Jesus Christ to lose it; which of them will you follow? Consider that you are religious men, and not physicians; and that you will be judged by your profession, and not by your health.”

Such are a few of the precepts advanced by the advocates of Monachism, in times past, and the careful observer will not fail to see that some of these opinions in a less striking and less objectionable shape are occasionally advanced by some very religious teachers of the present day.

Still some credit is due, even to the early monks; for like all other institutions of great magnitude the world has ever known, they have undoubtedly been of use. Monasteries were usually established in woods and large forests, which would not have been cleared and improved but for these monks; and it should not be forgotten, that the most important duty of the early monks, was to labor with their hands. (v)

“Four objects (says Waddington,) were comprehend-

(v) “Whoever works,” says Cassiani, “is attacked only by one demon, while the lazy man is by a thousand.”

ed in their profession—solitude, manual labor, fasting and prayer; and we cannot forbear to observe how large a portion of their time was devoted to the second. Indeed, so strictly was the necessity of such occupation inculcated, that the moderation of their other duties might almost appear to have been prescribed with that view. A body, debilitated by the excess of fasting or discipline, would have been disqualified for the offices of industry which were performed by the monks of Egypt. Without any possessions, and holding it alike discreditable to either beg or accept, they earned their daily bread, by their skill and diligence in making mats or baskets, as cutlers, as fullers, or as weavers, insomuch that their houses may seem to have resembled religious manufactories, rather than places consecrated to holy purposes; and the motive of their establishment is liable to the suspicion of being, in some cases at least, worldly and political. Yet in the descriptions of their practice, both objects were so united, that the prayer seems to have been inseparable from the labor. To that end, the employments which they chose were easy and sedentary, so that the mind might be free to expatiate, while the hands were in exercise. At the same time, they maintained that perpetual occupation was the only effectual method to prevent distractions, and fix the soul on worthy considerations; that thus alone the tediousness of solitude, and its attendant evils, can be remedied; that the monk who works has only one demon to tempt him, while the monk unoccupied is harassed by demons innumerable." Finally, however, by the legacies of the pious, they became rich, and worked less out of doors, but many of them devoted their lives to transcribing books; and thus,

many of the valuable works of the ancients have been preserved. (*w*)

The suppression of Monachism commenced by the religious reformation of Germany under Luther; in England, under Henry VIII. ; by the abolition of the Jesuits, in Portugal and France, in the middle of the 18th age; and by the suppression of the convents by Joseph II. in Austria. The revolution in France, finally completed their overthrow in that country, or has left to subsist but a few institutions, and these may be considered useful, especially in furnishing attendants in hospitals. In some other parts of Europe they still exist. In Spain, there are said now to be 1715 convents or monasteries. A few of them are rich, but only a few. Eight hundred and ninety of them contain less than twelve monks, and these are to be suppressed.

I hardly need add, that this kind of life is injurious to the health, both of body and mind. Medical writers enumerate many diseases to which these religious recluses, of both sexes, were peculiarly liable. Besides, a life thus passed, contrary to the wishes of nature, has the effect to render the character austere, despotic, (*x*) and often melancholy; and at the same time, disposes to exaltation and excitement of the brain and nervous system, and gives rise to innumerable nervous complaints.

But there is little need of cautioning the people of this country against such institutions. They are not of

(*w*) For further curious particulars relating to the discipline and conduct of the early monks, see Rapport's *du Physique et du Moral de L'Homme* by Cabanis, vol. 2. Also Zimmerman on Solitude, in four volumes.

(*x*) Those of the Popes which have been taken from the monasteries have in general been the most cruel and despotic.

a kind that can flourish in a republic. Among the good effects of a free government, is, calling into action the talents of each individual, and developing genius of every kind.

Hence we read of no monasteries in ancient Greece or Rome, while they flourish under absolute governments. Still, this slight history of Monachism will not be without its use, as it will serve to show how similar are the character and opinions of religious zealots in all ages, and how dangerous it is to follow implicitly their injunctions.

### *Of Fasting.*

Fasting is a religious custom that has been commanded, or has prevailed, in nearly all, if not all, the religions of the world.

The Egyptians had numerous religious fasts, as did also the Phœnicians, the Assyrians, and Hebrews. (*y*) According to Herodotus, the Egyptians prepared themselves, by fasting, for the great festival of Isis. Before being initiated into the mysteries of this celebrated Deity, it was necessary to fast ten days, and to abstain from wine. The Therapeutia, a body of Jewish fanatics, described in the preceding chapter, were remarkable for their great abstemiousness, and for the length and severity of their fasts. They abstained from wine altogether, and often fasted three days at a time. The Greeks, borrowing from Egypt many of her sacred rites, also had recourse to fasting. Initiation into the myste-

(*y*) See "Morin, De l'usage du jeune chez les anciens par rapport a la religion."

ries of Ceres, (z) was preceded by severe fasting, and during the celebration of her festivals, the whole city kept a fast. The Lacedemonians also, had recourse to very severe fasts, as religious duties, and their fasts extended even to the beasts. The Romans were frequently commanded by the oracles to fast, especially during great public calamities. Here also the worship of Ceres prevailed, and fasting constituted a part of the ceremony.

The Assyrians had very severe fasts, whenever they apprehended any great calamity. Thus when Jonah prophesied against Nineveh, the king of Nineveh “arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. And he caused it to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing; let them not feed nor drink water.” Jonah iii. 6, 7.

The aboriginal inhabitants of America had this ancient custom among them; and according to Charlevoix, observed severe fasts before going to war, and on other occasions.

Devotional fasts for the expiation of sins, it appears, were common among the Israelites; though the history of the patriarchs, gives no account of *their* observance of the custom. Individuals among them fasted when visited personally by any extraordinary calamity. Thus David fasted during the sickness of his child. 2 Samuel xii. 21.

“The Jews, (says Calmet,) in times of public calamity, appointed extraordinary fasts, and made even the

(z) Ceres is the same as the Isis of the Egyptians. Her worship, it is said, was first introduced into Greece, by Erectheus.

children at the breast fast. See Joel ii. 16. They begin the observance of their fasts in the evening after sunset, and remain without eating until the same hour the next day, or until the rising of the stars; on the great day of expiation, when they are more strictly obliged to fast, they continue without eating for twenty-four hours. Men are obliged to fast from the age of full thirteen, and women from the age of full eleven years. Children from the age of seven years fast in proportion to their strength. During this fast, they not only abstain from food, but from bathing, perfumes, and ointments; they go barefoot and are continent. This is the idea which the eastern people have generally of fasting; it is a total abstinence from pleasures of every kind. Besides those fasts, which are common to all Jews, others, which are devotional, are practised by the most zealous and pious. The Pharisee says (Luke xviii. 12,) 'I fast twice a week,' that is, on Thursday, in memory of Moses' going up mount Sinai on that day; and on Monday in memory of his coming down from thence. It is said that some Pharisees fasted four days in the week; and in the Greek of Judith, we read, that she fasted every day, except 'the eves of the sabbaths, and the sabbaths; and the eves of the new moons, and the new moons; and the feasts and solemn days of the house of Israel.'"

Fasting has also been observed as a religious duty, to a great extent, by the Bonzes and Talapoins, priests of Fo, in Eastern Asia and China, and also by the Gymnosophysts or Brachmans of India.

But probably the Mahometans have the longest fasts of any religious people. Mahomet enjoined fasting, as a duty of exceedingly great importance; indeed he

considers it *one* of the four fundamental points of religious practice, which are, prayer five times a day, fasting, alms-giving, and the pilgrimage to Mecca. Of so great moment did he consider fasting, that he used to say it was the "gate of religion, and the odor of the mouth of him who fasteth, is more grateful to God than that of musk."

The strictest of all the Mahometan fasts, is that of the month *Ramadan*, which is the ninth month of the Turkish or Arabic year. Mahomet told his followers that in this month, God sent the koran down from heaven by the angel Gabriel, who delivered it to him chapter by chapter. In commemoration of this great event, Mahomet instituted this fast, which somewhat resembles the Christian Lent, though it is more rigorously observed. During the whole month, they abstain entirely from meat and drink, every day, from the time they can "plainly distinguish a white thread from a black thread by the day-break," till the end of evening twilight; and during all this period they must be constantly at the places of religious worship. The Turks do not even swallow their spittle, while this fasting is continued. No artist or laborer is exempted from the observance of this fast; and those who are sick, or traveling, or serving as soldiers in the field, and so circumstanced that they cannot observe it in the month Ramadan, are nevertheless obliged to fast another entire month.

Mahomet very wisely instituted this fast during the hottest season of the year, a time when abstemiousness is beneficial to health; and he also disconnected it with revelry and drunkenness. The Mahometan fast is not preceded by that remnant of bacchanalian and pagan

worship, the Carnival, which is made to introduce the long fast of the Christian church.

But I presume that some of those calling themselves the followers of Christ, have been more strict in fasting than those of any other religious faith. It was not, however, until after the death of the apostles, that fasting was considered an important duty, and if I am not much mistaken, the practice of abstemiousness as an essential duty of Christians, was first insisted on by the Gnostics, one of the first sects that disturbed the peace of the church.

In the second century, Ammonius Saccas directed his followers to weaken their bodies, which, as he said, were hostile to the liberty of their souls, by means of hunger and thirst; and these views were entertained and advocated by Origen and the Mystics. Montanus soon after taught that fasts ought to be more numerous. But I have more fully described the progress of these notions respecting the importance of abstemiousness and other penances, in the preceding chapter, on the subject of Monachism; and for the present I shall confine myself to a few of the facts respecting the fasts of the Christian church.

The Catholic church, orders many days of fasting and abstinence. The most important is that of the forty days of Lent; a fast intended to prepare Christians for the Easter festival. In the Latin church, Lent formerly lasted but 36 days, which being the tenth part of the year, was thus devoted to God. In the fifth century, four days were added, in imitation of Christ's fasting forty days. Protestants generally consider Lent not to have been established before the second or third century; but the Catholic church maintains that it is of apostolic

origin, because, say they, as it was found established in the church, and did not originate from a council, it must therefore have descended from the apostles.

The civil laws, at one time, were very severe against those who neglected to fast. Charlemagne ordered that all those who transgressed the rule of the church not to eat in Lent, should be put to death; and in Poland, any one, who violated the rules of abstinence prescribed by the church, had his teeth taken out. Children, when eight years old, were obliged to keep Lent, and also other fasts. Some sects had numerous fasts. The Latin monks formerly had three fasts of forty days each, and the Greeks, four of seven days each, besides Lent. The Armenians had eight fasts in a year; so that, as Charadin observes, the people abstained from food most of the year. On occasion of any calamity, fasts were ordered. Thus the Rogation days were instituted, with processions and fasting, against injurious insects and other calamities, by Mamericus, Bishop of Vienna, about the middle of the fifth century, and which are still enjoined to be kept by the Episcopal church.

Until the year 1200, one meal a day was eaten during Lent. The eighth council of Toledo, in 653, orders that those who break their fast without necessity, shall eat no meat during the whole year, and shall not partake of the Lord's Supper at Easter. The council of Narbonne, in 1609, established as a rule, in relation to fasting, that the Bishops should summon together the physicians before Lent, and exhort them not to give certificates readily and without cause, (for by certificates from physicians, liberty to eat meat in Lent could be obtained,) and thus run the risk of ruining themselves

and those to whom they gave them, by employing *Science against God himself*.

The Church of England enjoins fixed days for fasting and abstinence, among which are the forty days of Lent, and every Friday except Christmas day. Other fasts are occasionally appointed in England, by royal proclamation. The church, however, gives no particular direction concerning fasting, and the ordinance of Parliament, prohibiting meat on fast days, is said to be designed for the encouragement of the fisheries and navigation.

In many of the United States, and especially in the New England States, there are annual fasts by proclamation of the Governor; and during the war of 1812-15, there was a national fast ordered by proclamation of the President of the United States.

Such are a few facts connected with the history of fasting. We have seen that it has prevailed in all ages, and in all religions, and that it has been carried to a great extent by the followers of Christ. Believing, as I do, that whatever was established and enjoined by our Saviour, is beneficial to mankind, and not injurious to health, it becomes important to ascertain what were his injunctions respecting fasting. It must, I think, strike every one with surprise, who has paid any attention to the fasts of the Christian church, to find that, as Calmet observes, "it does not appear by his own practice, or by his commands, that our Lord instituted any particular fast;" and the learned Mosheim observes—"no law was enacted by *Christ* and his *Apostles* concerning fasts; but the custom obtained, that most Christians, occasionally and privately, joined abstinence from food with their prayers; and especially when engaged in undertakings

of great importance. How much time a man should spend in this exercise, was left to the private judgment of each individual; nor did a person expose his character at all, if he thought it sufficient for *him* to observe only the rules of strict temperance. Of any solemn *public* fasts, except only on the anniversary day of the crucifixion of *Christ*, there is no mention in the most ancient times. Gradually, however, days of fasting were introduced; first by custom, and afterwards by legal sanction. Whether any thing of this nature occurred in the first century, and what days were devoted to fasting, we have not the means of deciding."

It is true that Christ himself fasted forty days and nights, but this is more than human nature can sustain. He gave no command for any one else to attempt it, though it is true that in all ages, many have attempted to imitate Christ in this respect. (a) The disciples of John interrogated Jesus, respecting the non-observance of fasts by his own disciples. "Then came to him the disciples of John, saying, Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not? And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bride-chamber mourn, [fast,] as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast." Matt. ix. 14, 15. His reply cannot be construed in favor of the custom. He alludes to a coming time of sorrow, when nature would withdraw the appetite, and then fasting would occur as the natural result of sorrow. This kind of fast-

(a) Dositheus, a Samaritan, fasted so rigorously as to occasion his death. He ought, however, to be ranked among the insane.

ing, the New Testament may commend, but it does not authorise any other.

“Defraud not ye one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.” 1 Cor. vii. 5. This is alluded to, as supporting and authorizing fasting. It can hardly be so considered if we receive the above quotation from the common translation. But late investigations show that the word *fasting* is an interpolation. (b) Indeed, there is much in the New Testament to show that all ordinances were done away. St. Paul says, (Col. ii.) that Christ has effaced the obligation we were under as respects ordinances; and that we shall not be judged “in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a holy day.” Tertullian, who flourished in the second century, observes—“the Christian’s God has not prescribed any fast, nor forbid him any aliment: that which he has forbidden him are actions that are bad; that which he has commanded, are actions that are good.” (De Jejune adv. Psych.) St. Basil also observes—“the true Christian fast consists in abstaining from vice—to fast from disputes, malignity and injustice.”

This kind of fast is of perpetual obligation upon the Christian; but I see no ground, in any of the teachings or practices of Christ, for abstaining from food, unless the appetite is impaired. When Christ had fasted forty days, it is said that he became an hungered, and did eat; plainly implying that during the period of fasting, he had not been an hungered. Indeed fasting, as a Christian duty, is hardly reconcilable with the care which Christ

(b) See Griesbach.

had for the bodies of men, as evidenced by his numerous miracles wrought for its welfare, and even a miracle to feed the multitude.

But though Christ did not authorize fasting from food, yet his religion is one of strict temperance. While it imposes no observances that may not be kept, alike in every place, and by all mankind, it gives liberty to enjoy the gifts of God ; at the same time discountenancing austerities and penances, and too great sensual indulgence.

Seeing, therefore, that there is not from Christ any injunction upon us to keep this ordinance, let us inquire into the propriety of it as regarding health.

I have no doubt that many persons eat daily, more food than is for their health ; and this is probably more the case with the people of the United States, than with those of any other country, for no other country furnishes so abundant a supply of nutriment for all its inhabitants. I therefore admit that an occasional fast among such a people may be useful, by giving the over-taxed stomach a time of repose. But no general rule can or ought to be given for the observance of a whole community. Occasional fasting may be beneficial in some cases, and in others, not injurious, but to many persons it may prove very injurious. While in hot climates, abstemiousness and occasional fasts are conducive to health, in cold climates they are dangerous. The inhabitants of cold countries must have frequent supplies of stimulating, nutritious food, in order to enjoy good health and to possess all the powers of the system in full vigor. Warm climates will permit people to live wholly on vegetables—but cold will not. Thus the Reformers in the north of Germany were the first to rebel against severe

fasts; and the emperor Maximilian, in 1519, begged Pope Leo X. to divide Lent into three parts, so that the Germans might be induced or enabled to keep it. Perhaps in times of barbarianism, and among a violent and ferocious people, fasting was essential to keep the passions of the people subdued, and the people themselves in subjection.

The priests of olden time were also legislators; and no doubt they were well aware of the effect of low diet and fasting, in rendering men more humble and obedient. Other means to effect the same object were also resorted to. Thus at one time it was ordered by the Superiors of the monasteries, that the monks should be bled six times in a year, in order as it was stated "to repress their vicious tendencies." Certain it is that it had the effect to make them submissive and obsequious, and the faithful were no longer scandalized by the very robust and healthy appearance of these devout persons. From a full consideration of the subject, it appears to me that days of fasting, or abstaining from food, had better be discontinued. We have seen that they have not the support of sacred authority; and surely no one will insist that Christians are obligated to religiously keep such days, when neither Christ or his apostles have enjoined it.

Though, as I have said, occasional fasting, or abstaining from one meal, may not be injurious to some people, yet to many it is so, especially to the young, who do not endure fasting so well as the aged. Generally some injury arises from interrupting accustomed habits, such as omitting one full meal, especially to laboring men. Under great mental or moral excitement, life may be sustained for a long time without nourishment, and even

without sleep, and exposed to cold ; as is evident from the histories of the austerities of Catharine de Cordue, and other devotees. Women, however, endure fasting better than men. In long days, to take no food through the day, would injure most people ; and would be fatal, of course, in countries where the sun does not set for months, if the Mahometan fast, from sunrise to sunset, should be observed. An annual fast ordered by Government is truly ridiculous. That the civil power should thus interfere in religious duties, and order what is never but partially complied with, can have no other than an injurious effect. The day appointed for fasting, is usually a day of revelry ; (c) and thus the moral and religious sense of a community is injured, by the people becoming accustomed to disregard the advice of Government, and the recommendations of their religious teachers.

Habitual temperance would be far better than occasional or special fasting, and in my opinion more conformable to Christ's teaching. The simple and proper rule for fasting, appears to me to be—to fast when nature, by sorrow or sickness, destroys the appetite. (d)

(c) On the day appointed for the last annual fast, in this State, I had occasion to go into three adjoining towns, in all of which, I saw crowds amusing themselves by ball playing, and other diversions.

(d) I have noticed within a few years, that fasting has been greatly urged by the clergy in this country, as a religious duty, especially by what are called the "*new measure clergy*." The Rev. W. C. Walton, in his Tract on Special Efforts to promote the work of God, says—"it is a remark founded on experience, that Fasting often contributes much to the efficacy of Prayer," and urges more attention to it. He, however, gives no details of his experience in this respect.



## CHAPTER IV.

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### INFLUENCE UPON HEALTH, OF SOME OF THE RITES, SACRAMENTS AND CEREMONIES OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

I do not include in this section, Rites, Sacraments or Ceremonies, prevailing in other religions than the Christian. I wish the work to be of practical utility, and therefore shall confine myself mostly to remarks applicable to customs prevalent in the country where it will circulate.

Numerous ceremonies have prevailed in the Christian Church, but most if not all of them have given rise to much disputation and controversy, both as to the proper manner of celebrating them, and also as to their institution by Christ and his apostles, and their authority for the observance of them. The Roman Catholic and Greek churches agree as to the doctrine of the Sacraments, which they say are seven—to wit;—Baptism Confirmation, Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction, Orders and Marriage. The Protestants in general acknowledge but two sacraments—Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Luther and Melancthon at first ranked Penance or absolution as a sacrament, but afterwards considered it only as a preparation for the Lord's Supper. The Quakers and some other Christian sects, consider the sacraments as of little importance, and not binding

upon Christians. Of these sacraments, the Lord's Supper and Baptism have very generally been celebrated in Christian churches, and these two, I propose first to examine.

*Of the Lord's Supper.*

As this is celebrated in many places, I suppose there is no objection to it, on account of any injurious effect upon the health, i. e. when the ceremony is short and does not interfere with the usual meals of the day, and when the bread and wine, or whatever else is used, is of good quality and taken in small quantity. But as it is not always so celebrated, it is therefore important to examine the subject a little in detail.

In the first place, it appears to me that it will be proper to inquire what has been, and are, the various methods of celebrating this ceremony; secondly, to learn what command or directions for it, are furnished by the Divine author of our religion; and lastly to show in what respect it affects the health.

First, then,—what has been the history of this sacrament, as it is called? According to Ecclesiastical historians, the celebration of the Lord's Supper was at first accompanied by hospitable meetings, called *agapæ* or love-feasts; every Christian, according to his circumstances, bringing portions of wine and bread, and other things, as oblations to the Lord: in this, then, there was a resemblance to customs previously existing among the Jews. But in order to have a clear idea of the manner it was celebrated in the earliest times of Christianity, it is necessary to read attentively, the accounts given of it by the earliest fathers. The following full and authen-

tic detail from the first *Apology* for the Christians of *Justin Martyr*, enables us to learn how it was celebrated in his time. He lived about 150 years after Christ.

“On the day which is called *Sunday*, all, whether dwelling in the towns or in the villages, hold meetings; and the memoirs of the apostles, and the writings of the prophets, are read, as much as the time will permit; then, the reader closing, the president, in a speech, exhorts and excites to an imitation of those excellent examples; then we all rise, and pour forth united prayers; and when we close our prayer, as was before said, bread is brought forward, and wine, and water; and the President utters prayers and thanksgivings, according to his ability, and the people respond, by saying *amen*; and a distribution and participation of the things blessed, takes place to each one present, and to those absent, it is sent by the Deacons. And those who are prosperous and willing, give what they choose, each according to his own pleasure; and what is collected, is deposited with the President; and he carefully relieves the orphans and widows, and those who from sickness or other causes are needy, and also those in prison, and the strangers that are residing with us, and in short, all that have need of help. We all commonly hold our assemblies on *Sunday*, because it is the first day, on which God converted the darkness and matter, and framed the world; and *Jesus Christ*, our Saviour, on the same day, arose from the dead.”

From this it seems that the Lord's Supper was at first celebrated every Sunday, and it appears to me, was like an ordinary meal among friends, devoted to some common cause in which they all felt much engaged. It is certain that wine was not always used clear, as wine and

water are spoken of, and portions of wine and water were sent to the sick, from the table, and I believe also to infants in a subsequent age, for very early, this rite was deemed essential to salvation. Some further light is thrown on this subject by the same authority—Justin Martyr, in his account of the manner of receiving new converts into the churches, about the year 150. As the account is important in other respects, and as I may have occasion again to refer to it, I will quote the whole of it. It is contained in his (so called) second *Apology*.

“In what manner we dedicate ourselves to God, after being renewed by Christ, we will now explain; lest, by omitting this, we should seem to dissemble in our statement. Those who believe and are persuaded, that the things we teach and inculcate are true, and who possess ability thus to live, are directed to pray with fasting, and to ask of God the forgiveness of their former sins; we also fasting and praying with them. Then we conduct them to a place where there is water; and they are regenerated [baptized]; for they receive a washing with water, in the name of the Father of all, the Lord God, and of our Saviour, *Jesus Christ*, and of the Holy Spirit. For Christ said, *Except ye be regenerated, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.*” “This washing is likewise called *illumination*; because the minds of those who have learned these things, are enlightened. And whoever is enlightened, is washed in the name of *Jesus Christ*, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate; and in the name of the Holy Spirit, who by the prophets, foretold all that relates to Christ.” “And after thus washing the convinced and consenting person, we conduct him to where the brethren, as we call them, are assembled; and there offer our united suppli-

cations, with earnestness, both for ourselves and for the enlightened person, and for all others every where ; that we may conduct ourselves as becomes those who have received the truth, and by our deeds prove ourselves good citizens, and observers of what is commanded us ; so that we may be saved with an eternal salvation. And on ending our prayers, we salute each other with a kiss. Then, there is placed before the President of the brethren, bread, and a cup of water and wine ; which he taking, offers praise and glory to the Father of all, through the name of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and gives thanks at great length, that such blessings are vouchsafed us ; and when he ends the prayers and the thanksgiving, all the people present respond, *amen*. Now the word *amen*, in the Hebrew tongue, signifies *so be it*. And after the President has given thanks, and all the people have uttered the response, those whom we call Deacons, distribute to every one present, to partake of the bread and the wine and water, over which thanks were given : and to those not present, the Deacons carry it. And this food is called by us the *Eucharist* ; which it is unlawful for any one to partake of, unless he believes the things taught by us to be true, and has been washed with the washing for the remission of sins in regeneration, and lives according to what *Christ* has taught."

Some Christian sects, however, even in this early age, ventured to dispute the propriety of thus celebrating the Lord's Supper. The Tatianists, or the followers of Tatian, a learned and distinguished man, a disciple of Justin Martyr, held wine in such abhorrence, that they would not use it even in the Lord's Supper, but used wa-

ter instead. They were called *Renouncers* and *Water drinkers*. (e)

In the third century, more ceremony and longer prayers were annexed to the celebration of the Lord's Supper. "Neither those doing penance, nor those not yet baptized, were allowed to be present at the celebration of this ordinance; which practice, it is well known, was derived from the pagan mysteries. That golden and silver vessels were used in it, is testified by *Prudentius*, among others; and I see no reason to doubt the fact, in respect to the more opulent christian churches. The time of its administration was different, according to the state and circumstances of the churches. Some deemed the morning, some the afternoon, and some the evening, to be the most suitable time for its celebration. Neither were all agreed, how often this most sacred ordinance should be repeated. But all believed it absolutely necessary to the attainment of salvation; and therefore they universally wished infants to become partakers of it. The sacred feast, in some places preceded, and in others followed, the Lord's Supper."—[Mosheim.]

In the fourth century, further alterations were made respecting this ceremony. Mosheim says—"That the Lord's Supper was administered twice or three times a week, (though in some places, only on Sunday,) to all who assembled for the worship of God, appears from innumerable testimonies. It was also administered at the

(e) In this respect, we appear to be living in a circle. Within a short time, the Christian churches in New England and the Northern States, have commenced agitating the question about using wine at the Lord's table. Many are for renouncing it, and using cider, or wine-must, or merely water. (See the various religious newspapers for 1835, especially the *New York Evangelist*, and the *Connecticut Observer*.)

sepulchres of the martyrs, and at funerals ; whence arose, afterwards, the *masses* in honor of the saints, and for the dead. The bread and wine were now every where elevated, before distribution, so that they might be seen by the people, and be viewed with reverence ; and hence arose, not long after, the *adoration of the symbols*. Neither *catechumens*, nor *penitents*, nor those who were supposed to be under the power of evil spirits, were allowed to be present at this sacred ordinance ; nor did the sacred orators, in their public discourses, venture to speak openly and plainly concerning the true nature of it. The origin of this custom was not very honorable, as has been stated before ; yet many offer an honorable excuse for it, by saying, that this concealment might awaken eagerness in the *catechumens*, to penetrate early into these mysteries."

In subsequent times, it was still more changed ; and in the eighth century, was considered the most important part of the worship of God, and was protracted to a great length. The destroying of any part of the great sacrifice was considered a great sin, and the loss of any portion a great calamity. Pope Gregory III. on this subject, decided that—"If any one, through negligence, should destroy the Eucharist, i. e. the sacrifice ; let him do penance one year, or three Quadrigessimas. If he lets it fall on the ground, carelesely, he must sing fifty Psalms. Whoever neglects to take care of the sacrifice, so that worms get into it, or it lose its color, or taste, must do penance twenty or thirty days ; and the sacrifice must be burned in the fire. Whoever turns up the cup at the close of the solemnity of the mass, must do penance forty days. If a drop from the cup should fall on the altar, the minister must suck up the drop, and do

penance three days ; and the linen cloth, which the drop touched, must be washed three times, over the cup, and the water in which it is washed, be cast into the fire."

In the ninth century, originated, according to Protestant writers, the doctrine of transubstantiation, which was started by Parrahasius Radbertus, though the Roman Catholics maintain it to be as old as the communion itself. It was soon after this time generally received, and in 1215, solemnly confirmed, by Pope Innocent III. in the fourth Lateran Council. The creed of the church on this subject is contained in certain canons pronounced in the council of Trent, session 13.

The religious reformers in the time of Luther, did not agree among themselves respecting this rite, though they all condemned the opinion of the Romish Church, respecting it. Luther took the words, "This is my body," &c., in their literal sense, and thought that the body and blood of Jesus Christ were united in a mysterious way, with the bread and wine, so that the communicant receives with and under the bread and wine, the real body and real blood of the Redeemer. Zuinglius, on the other side, understood the words in a figurative sense, and supposed that Jesus Christ meant to say, "the bread and the wine represent my body and my blood," and maintained, therefore, that the bread and wine were mere signs of the body and the blood of Christ. From this difference of opinion arose a violent dispute between Luther and Zuinglius, which, in later times, has been continued between the Lutheran and Calvinistic divines. The opinion advanced by Calvin, by which a spiritual presence of the body and blood of Christ is supposed in the communion, though it came nearer to the Lutheran doctrine than that of Zuinglius did, yet was essentially

different, and, therefore, also met with a strong opposition from the strict adherents of Luther. Melancthon inclined to the Calvinistic notion, and so did many other Lutheran divines, who were called by the opposite party *Philipists* and *Crypto-Calvinists*. The *formula concordiæ*, or articles of religious peace, suppressed the *Crypto-Calvinists* in the greatest part of the Lutheran church, and established the idea of Luther. In recent times, many Lutheran divines have inclined to the Calvinistic doctrine. The Greek church has not adopted the doctrine of transubstantiation in its whole extent; yet her doctrine comes nearer to this dogma than to that of the Reformed church. The Oriental Christians differ also from the Western, in using leavened bread in the Lord's Supper, and in administering it to children. (*f*)

The method of celebrating this ordinance varies very much among the Protestant sects in this country, scarcely any two agreeing. Some celebrate it every month or oftener; some only three or four times a year, or less. Some sects admit the members of other sects to commune with them, while others do not. Some receive the bread and wine kneeling, others while sitting. Some connect it with meetings of several days continuance, others with what are called love-feasts, while others make a very short ceremony of it, occupying but a short time, between the forenoon and afternoon service. The Quakers, like the ancient Paulicians, do not consider it as enjoined by Christ, and reject it entirely.

Again, Christians are not agreed, respecting the articles to be used. As I have stated, some insist that the bread used should be leavened, others that it should not

(*f*) American Encyclopedia, vol. viii.—art.—Lord's Supper.

be. Some use bread in considerable quantity, while others, a mere wafer. The Greek and Latin churches had a contest on the question, whether leavened or unleavened bread should be used in the communion. Both churches claimed to have had their customs handed down from the Apostles.

A great difference of opinion has also prevailed among Christians respecting the drink to be used. I have already noticed that the Tatians, a very ancient sect, rejected wine and used only water; and quite recently some portion of the churches in this country have proposed a similar change. Their reasons, however, for condemning wine, are different, I presume, from those of the ancient Tatians. Those that object to wine at present, I believe, are opposed to it, because it is not pure wine, but has alcohol in it; but the Tatians no doubt had, or could easily obtain wine of a similar quality to that used in the time of Christ. To obviate the objection, that the wine of the present day is not pure, or is not similar to that used by Christ, professedly pious people have endeavored to obtain that which is; as the following advertisement will show.—

*“ Pure Wine for Churches.*

The subscribers keep on hand, of their own importation, a supply of Wines, or pure juice of the grape, entirely free from all admixture of distilled spirits, or any other ingredient, which they sell at moderate prices for the communion service, as a substitute for the adulterated wines, in almost universal use. They are made with great care, expressly for the subscribers, and have been procured in the belief that such wines would be preferred for the churches. The evidence they

have of their purity is unquestionable, and that they will keep sound for years, has been fully tested. They can be had in pipes, quarter-casks, half-quarter-casks, demijohns, and cases of one dozen bottles each, and can be shipped to any part of the United States. All orders will be promptly attended to.

POMEROY & BULL,  
*Water-street, New-York.*

New-York, Oct. 1834.”

To this advertisement, which has been extensively circulated in the religious papers of the country, is appended a certificate, signed by several clergymen, and men renowned for piety, stating that they believe the wines of P. & B. are pure and suitable to be used in the communion service. Whether Messrs. P. & B. have met with encouragement in this attempt to remedy what many consider an evil, or whether this “pure juice of the grape,” has come into general use, I am unable to say. I believe it has not: for several years previous to this the same gentlemen endeavored by similar means to induce churches to purchase their “Burgundy wine warranted pure,” for the communion service; but they did not succeed to much extent. Some have proposed cider as a substitute, this being the common drink and natural production of this country, as wine was of Palestine. A Reverend clergyman of this town told me that tamarind water was used in some churches, and the New-York Christian Intelligencer of July 4th, 1835, says, “We hear of churches introducing tamarind water, and molasses and water—for the wine cup; and recently we have heard of a church using buttermilk.” A late writer in the Connecticut (religious) Observer, who is known

to be a highly respectable and venerable clergyman in an adjoining town, is opposed even to pure wine, cider, &c. &c. He says—"Not a drop of liquor which can produce intoxication, ought the church ever to use in the celebration of the Lord's Supper." The question appears to be deemed by many of the clergy of this country a very important one, and is awakening much discussion. How it will be decided, time only can determine.

Let us now, in the second place, inquire what are the instructions of Christ on this subject. It is very evident, from the preceding history, that they were not explicit and precise, or there certainly would not have been such a strange diversity of opinion respecting the manner of celebrating it. Even now, after eighteen centuries of disputation, the proper and just manner of celebrating it is a matter of dispute in the Christian church, and among members of the same sect.

The first account given of it in the scripture is in the New Testament. Nothing is foretold of it in the Old Testament, nor is any thing mentioned of Christ's intention to institute it, or of the necessity or use of it. Matthew gives us the following account of it.

"Now the first *day* of the *feast of* unleavened bread, the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover? And he said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples. And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and they made ready the passover. Now when the even was come, he sat down with the twelve. And as they did eat, he said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. And they were exceedingly sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I? And he answer-

ed and said, He that dippeth *his* hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me. The Son of man goeth as it is written of him : but wo unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed ! it had been good for that man if he had not been born. Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I ? He said unto him, Thou hast said. And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed *it*, and brake *it*, and gave *it* to the disciples, and said, Take, eat ; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave *it* to them, saying, Drink ye all of it ; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom. And when they had sung a hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives."

In our common version, this portion of the chapter is headed—"The holy supper instituted,"—but surely no one will say this is correct ; for here is certainly no intimation, or any command whatever, given to his disciples or any one else to continue it. If any thing can be inferred from it, of a practical duty for his disciples, it appears to me it would be to renounce the use of wine in this world as Christ himself then did.

St. Mark—xiv. 12—26,—says—"And the first day of unleavened bread, when they killed the passover, his disciples said unto him, Where wilt thou that we go and prepare that thou mayest eat the passover ? And he sendeth forth two of his disciples, and saith unto them, Go ye into the city, and there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water : follow him. And wheresoever he shall go in, say ye to the good man of the house,

the Master saith, Where is the guest-chamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples? And he will show you a large upper room furnished *and* prepared: there make ready for us. And his disciples went forth, and came into the city, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover. And in the evening he cometh with the twelve. And as they sat and did eat, Jesus said, Verily I say unto you, One of you which eateth with me shall betray me. And they began to be sorrowful, and to say unto him one by one, *Is it I?* and another *said, Is it I?* And he answered and said unto them, *It is one of the twelve that dippeth with me in the dish.* The Son of man indeed goeth as it is written of him: but wo to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had never been born. And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake *it*, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: this is my body. And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave *it* to them; and they all drank of it. And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many. Verily I say unto you I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God. And when they had sung a hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives."

Here again is no command to continue the practice. The account is similar to that of Matthew; indeed Calmet and others, consider the gospel of Mark as but an abridgement of Matthew.

St. Luke—xxii. 7, 23,—says: "Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the passover must be killed. And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the passover that we may eat. And they said unto him,

Where wilt thou that we prepare? And he said unto them, Behold, when ye are entering into the city; there shall a man meet you, having a pitcher of water; follow him into the house where he entereth in. And ye shall say unto the good man of the house, The Master saith unto thee, Where is the guest-chamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples? And he shall show you a large upper room furnished: there make ready. And they went, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover. And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve Apostles with him. And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And he took the cup and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide *it* among yourselves: For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake *it*, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup *is* the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you. But, behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me *is* with me on the table. And truly the Son of man goeth, as was determined: but wo unto that man by whom he is betrayed! And they began to inquire among themselves, which of them it was that should do this thing."

Here it will be noticed, that in several particulars, the account differs from that of Matthew or Mark. This may be accounted for, from the fact that Luke was not present, and the same is true of Mark. There is, to be sure, a slight command contained in the words—"This

do in remembrance of me ;” but this was said of eating the bread, and not of drinking the wine.

But of all the Evangelists, we should naturally look to John, for a full and distinct account of this ceremony, said to have been instituted by Christ, and binding upon all his followers ; for John was present at the last supper, where he lay on the bosom of Jesus, and for whom our Saviour had a particular friendship. But on examining his gospel, we do not find the subject noticed at all. It may be said that John did not intend to allude to circumstances which are noticed in the other Gospels—that he was aware of the other gospels, and avoided the topics on which they treated. If this were true, it would still appear surprising that he who must have had the most perfect knowledge of the ceremony, did not allude to it. But it is not true, for John does mention things, and those too of apparently trivial importance, which the others have also mentioned. Besides, there is not proof that he had ever seen the gospels of the other Evangelists, of which, undoubtedly, there were very few copies ; and some writers, particularly Semler and Tittman, say that John's gospel was written prior to the others. This may not be correct, though nothing positive is known about it.

Thus we see the gospel affords but very slight ground for asserting that this ceremony was instituted by Christ. Some of the most devout of the Christian sects have not believed that he did so ; as, for instance, the Quakers, and some of the most pure of the ancient churches. The Paulicians, who spread through Armenia and other countries in the seventh century, who abhorred the worship of saints and the use of relics and images, pompous ceremonies, and ecclesiastical domination, and who for cen-

turies endured a series of the most bloody persecutions from the orthodox sovereigns of the church of Rome, dispensed with the rites of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Those early and faithful Christians did not believe that Christ intended they should continue them. In fact it is to me very surprising on examining the subject, that this custom has so long prevailed, when there is so very slight authority from Scripture, and none from reason, for its continuance.

The following remarks, from the excellent Robert Barclay, appear to me to be irrefutable :—

“ We find this ceremony only mentioned in scripture in four places, to wit, *Matthew*, *Mark*, and *Luke*, and by *Paul* to the *Corinthians*. If any would infer any thing from the frequency of the mentioning of it, that will add nothing ; for it being a matter of fact, is therefore mentioned by the evangelists ; and there are other things less memorable, as often, yea, oftener mentioned. *Matthew* and *Mark* give only an account of the matter of fact, without any precept to do so afterwards ; simply declaring, that Jesus at that time did desire them to *eat of the bread and drink of the cup* ; to which *Luke* adds these words, *This do in remembrance of me*. If we consider this action of Christ with his apostles, there will appear nothing singular in it for a foundation to such a strange *superstructure* as many in their airy imaginations have sought to build upon it ; for both *Matthew* and *Mark* express it as an act done by him as he was eating. *Matthew* saith, *And as they were eating* ; and *Mark*, *And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, &c.* Now this act was no singular thing, neither any solemn institution of a *gospel ordinance* ; because it was a constant custom among the *Jews*, as *Paulus*

*Riccus* observes at length in his *Celestial Agriculture*, that when they did eat the passover, the Master of the family did take bread, and bless it, and breaking it, gave of it to the rest ; and likewise taking wine, did the same ; so that there can nothing further appear in this, than that Jesus Christ, *who fulfilled all righteousness*, and also observed the *Jewish feasts and customs*, used this also among his disciples only, that as in most other things he labored to draw their minds to a further thing, so in the use of this he takes occasion to put them in mind of his death and sufferings, which were shortly to be ; which he did the oftener inculcate unto them, for that they were averse from believing it. And as for that expression of *Luke*, *Do this in remembrance of me*, it will amount to no more than this, that being the last time that Christ did eat with his disciples, he desired them, that in their eating and drinking they might have regard to him, and by the remembering of that opportunity, be the more stirred up to follow him diligently through sufferings and death, &c. But what man of reason, laying aside the prejudice of education, and the influence of tradition, will say, that this account of the *matter of fact* given by *Matthew* and *Mark*, or this expression of *Luke*, to *Do that in remembrance of him*, will amount to these consequences, which the generality of Christians have sought to draw from it ; as calling it, *Augustissimum Eucharistiæ Sacramentum, venerabile altaris Sacramentum ; the principal seal of the covenant of grace, by which all the benefits of Christ's death are sealed in believers ;* and such like things ?”

Having shewn, as it appears to me, that this rite, which has led to great contention and even to the shedding of much blood, derives no support from the in-

structions of Christ, I proceed to say that it ought to be abandoned, because it may, and no doubt often does prove injurious to health. As I have said, when the ceremony is short, when but little and good wine and bread is used, and no meals interfered with, it is not perhaps to be objected to on this account. But there is much objection to some persons using any wine, and more especially so, if it be impure. It is poison to some persons. To this objection we might add that it frequently interrupts the usual meal, and often confines persons in uncomfortable houses and postures, for a long time, to the injury of those in feeble health, to the very aged and the young.

I know it may be said that but a small quantity of wine is drank; and I presume this is the fact generally; yet I see by published statements, that some clergymen of experience, think that so much is often taken, as to excite the system, and even lead to habits of intoxication. The Connecticut Observer for April 20th, 1835, contains a communication from a distinguished and aged clergyman (*g*) of a neighboring town, who has many years been pastor of the church where he now officiates, in which he asks—"Is not much of the edification thought to be enjoyed by the divine smiles on sacramental services, *mere animal feeling*, excited by that hideous spirit?"—meaning, the alcoholic spirit contained in the wine. Others tell us, of "the deep, long swallow sometimes witnessed by the officers of the church when the cup is presented," and state that "reformed drunkards have gone directly from the communion table to the tavern." (See New York Evangelist for June 27, 1835.)

(*g*) Dr. Chapin, of Wethersfield.

These insinuations and statements are made by experienced clergymen,—men renowned for piety. Perhaps they are not exactly correct ; still they may be, and if so, they afford additional and strong reasons for discontinuing the ceremony entirely.

But, let the whole subject be re-examined now ; and instead of contending whether wine or cider, or tamarind water, or wine must, or pure water, or leavened or unleavened bread should be used, let a careful examination be made whether Christ actually enjoined the celebration of this rite at all. If he did positively enjoin it upon his followers by his word and example, then it may be inquired whether they are at liberty to vary from his word and example. And if they have, may they not be permitted so to vary from it, that other articles besides bread and wine may “represent the body and blood of Christ ?” If this be conceded, then some objections will be done away, and harmony on this subject be restored to the protestant church in this region.

While on this subject, I deem it proper to add my conviction that the continuance of this ceremony, and the dissensions among Christians respecting it, will tend to lessen in the minds of reflecting and inquiring men, their respect for those, who profess to be governed by the Christian dispensation. They see nothing of a moral or instructive nature in this ceremony ; but they see it in strange contrast with Christ's teachings, all of which were calculated to make men better. In these, he always kept *himself* out of sight ; but the observance of this rite, seems to be a kind of worship of Christ himself, which, it appears to me, he never enjoined upon all his followers.

*Of Baptism.*

In regard to this ceremony, I propose to pursue the same course of inquiry, that I have done in relation to that of the Lord's Supper ;—first, to learn what the ceremony has been ; second, what the gospel of Christ enjoins respecting it ; and third, to consider its effects upon the health.

We learn from Mosheim, that “in the first century, baptism was administered, in convenient places, without the public assemblies ; and by immersing the candidates wholly in water. At first, all who were engaged in propagating Christianity, administered this rite : nor can it be called in question, that whoever persuaded any person to embrace Christianity, could baptise his own disciple.”

In the second century, says the same historian, “many ceremonies took their rise from the custom of the Egyptians and of almost all the eastern nations, of conveying instruction by *images, actions, and sensible signs* and emblems. The Christian doctors, therefore, thought it would be advantageous to the cause of Christianity, to place the truths which are necessary to be known, in order to salvation, as it were, *before the eyes* of the unreflecting multitude, who with difficulty contemplate abstract truths. The new converts were to be taught, that those who are *born again*, who are initiated by baptism, into the Christian worship, and that they ought to exhibit in their conduct the innocence of little infants : therefore, *milk and honey*, the common food of infants, was administered to them.” “Twice a year, namely, at *Easter* and *Whitsuntide*, (*Paschatis et*

*Pentecostis diebus,*) *baptism* was probably administered by the *bishop*, or by the *Presbyters* acting by his command and authority. The candidates for it were immersed wholly in water, with invocation of the sacred Trinity, according to the Saviour's precept, after they had repeated what they called the *Creed*, (*Symbolum*), and had renounced all their sins and transgressions, and especially the *devil* and his *pomp*. The baptised were signed with the cross, anointed, commended to God by prayer and imposition of hands, and finally directed to taste some milk and honey."

In the third century, "*Baptism* was publicly administered, twice a year, to candidates who had gone through a long preparation and trial, none being present as spectators, but such as had been themselves baptized. The effect of baptism was supposed to be the remission of sins: and the bishop, by the imposition of hands and prayer, it was believed, conferred those gifts of the Holy Spirit which were necessary for living a holy life. None were admitted to the sacred font, until the exorcist had, by a solemn and menacing formula, declared them free from servitude to the prince of darkness and made servants of God. The persons baptized, returned home, decorated with a crown and a white robe; the first being indicative of their victory over the world and their lusts, the latter, of their acquired innocence."

Without tracing more minutely the history of this ceremony, I will merely say that baptism has prevailed as a religious rite, among all sects, whether Heathen, Jews or Mahometans, and probably originated from the necessity of frequent bathings and ablutions. It was practiced by the Jews before Christ, and every converted heathen was washed as a symbol of his purification from the

stains of his previous life. Baptism became a Christian ceremony, and, in the time of the apostles, consisted in being dipped into water, and taking a new name. The immersion of the whole body was omitted in case of the sick. After several centuries, the mode of baptism by sprinkling was resorted to in consequence of the inconvenience of immersing the whole body, in the northern climates of Europe. In the early centuries of the Christian church, the delay of baptism after conversion was not uncommon; but when St. Augustine taught that the "unbaptized were irrevocably damned," all became anxious not to delay any longer, and also caused the baptism of children to become general. (*h*)

The Montanists baptize the dead, and the Roman Catholics the bells of churches, even to the present day. The Roman and Greek Catholics consecrate the water previous to baptism, though the Protestants do not; but in some countries they continue the practice of exorcism.

In the United States, most religious sects sprinkle, though the Baptists always, and some other sects occasionally, immerse. Most sects also baptize infants, and this by the Episcopalians is called "regeneration."

II. What are the instructions of Christ on this subject?

It appears from Matt. iii. 6, 11, that John baptized with water, but he said Christ would baptize "with the Holy Ghost and *with* fire." Christ himself was baptiz-

(*h*) The Roman Church, the Jansenists, and some other Christian sects, believe in the damnation of infants not baptised. This belief, no doubt, led to the following grave suggestion of Dr. Fodere in the second volume of his *Medicine Legale*, 1813, "Quant au baptême, il me semble qu'il sera toujours facile de l'administrer, après, avoir percé les membranes, par le moyen d'un seringue à injection." See other instructions on this subject in *De la Motte. Trait complet des Accouchemens.*

ed, but it appears to have been done in conformity with established usages; for the same reason Timothy was circumcised. Christ himself baptized no one; if he considered this a rite of so much importance, why did he not inculcate it by his example? True, he commanded his followers to go forth and preach the gospel, baptizing the converted in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. But to me, this command appears to have been given in reference to the name to be given them;—i. e. induce men to repent and reform, and to embrace the new religious views which he every where insists upon, and to show their devotion to it in the ordinary way of that age, by taking a new name. (i)

John did not enjoin his disciples to continue his baptism, which was with *water*, but said Christ would come and “baptize with the Holy Ghost and fire.” It is of no consequence in this inquiry, what this baptism with the Holy Ghost and with fire, means; in fact, biblical critics do not agree respecting it; but it is evident it does not mean with *water*.

I scarcely need say to any one who reads the Scriptures, that infant baptism is not there enjoined at all; yet, as I have said, it very generally prevails, and by some is considered regeneration, though many who resort to it do not admit this. The Jansenists believed it essential to the salvation of infants, and many of the Protestant sects inclined to this opinion.

In the *third place*, I am to consider the effect this ceremony has upon the health.

I am aware that in warm countries, or in the warm

(i) On this subject, see an account of it, and the refutation of the opinion, that it is an institution of Christ, by Robert Barclay, in his “Apology for the Quakers.”

weather of temperate climates, frequent ablution is not injurious, but useful, and in such countries, I know that the practice is unobjectionable, as regards health, when resorted to as a religious duty. But in cold climates and in cold weather, it is hazardous, as every one knows. To be immersed in cold water, and to remain in wet clothes, often for a considerable time, certainly must expose people, and particularly females and invalids, to great danger. (*j*) Sometimes in this country, holes are cut in the ice in rivers, to baptize in winter. Surely such a practice deserves reprehension. Some churches have a large bathing tub, and can warm the water; this course is less objectionable.

But the practice of carrying little infants to church in the cold, to be baptized, is still more reprehensible, and in many countries, is the cause of innumerable deaths. M. M. Edwards and Villerme, in 1829, addressed to the Royal Institut de France, a memoir on the Influence of Temperature on the mortality of Infants, in which they say the facts show, that many more infants die in winter than in warm weather; and they urge these facts upon the attention of ministers of religion and legislators, as proving that the exposure of infants to the cold in carrying them to be baptized, is one great cause of this increased mortality. These facts have been verified by Doct.

(*j*) A few facts in proof of this have come under our notice. We have known females become sick after being thus immersed in cold water.—They were in good health previously, and took cold at the time, which caused disease of the lungs. One of those to whom we allude, never left the house after the immersion, and death ensued in a few months. We lately noticed an account of a female in the last stages of consumption, being baptized through a hole cut in the ice for that purpose. She died soon after.—New-York Christian Intelligencer, July 11th, 1835.

Trevisan of Italy, whose researches were principally made at Castel Franco and its environs. He also attributes much of this increased mortality to the exposure of children at church to be baptized. (*k*)

Having shown that this ceremony was neither absolutely enjoined or practised by Christ—that no precise rules are given concerning it—that religious sects do not agree as to the manner of administering it, and are kept disunited solely on account of this disagreement—and that it may be injurious to the health, especially of the feeble, and of infants, and in cold climates, I think the practice ought to be abandoned.

Some other ceremonies are alluded to in the New Testament, which appear to me to be much more strongly enjoined upon the followers of Christ than either of those I have considered, particularly that of washing one another's feet; and I much wonder why it has not been practised, or rather, why those who thought they were at liberty to neglect this, did not feel equally at liberty to omit the ceremonies of Baptism, and the Lord's Supper. The reasoning of Robert Barclay on this subject deserves great attention, and appears to me unanswerable.

“But to give a further evidence, how these consequences have not any bottom from the practice of that ceremony, nor from the words following, *Do this, &c.*, let us consider another of the like nature, as it is at length expressed by *John*, chap. xiii. 3, 4, 8, 13, 14, 15. *Jesus riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments, and took a towel, and girded himself: after that, he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disci-*

(*k*) “Revue Medicale,” 1835.

*ples' feet ; and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded : Peter said unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet : Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. So after he had washed their feet,—he said, Know ye what I have done to you ? If I, then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet : for I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. As to which, let it be observed, that John relates this passage to have been done at the same time with the other of breaking bread ; both being done the night of the passover, after supper. If we regard the narration of this, and the circumstances attending it, it was done with far more solemnity, and prescribed far more punctually and particularly than the former. It is said only, As he was eating, he took bread ; so that this would seem to be but an occasional business : but here he rose up, he laid by his garments, he girded himself, he poured out the water, he washed their feet, he wiped them with a towel : he did this to all of them ; which are circumstances still far more observable than those noted in the other. The former was a practice common among the Jews, used by all masters of families upon that occasion ; but this, as to the manner, and person acting it, to wit, for the master to rise up, and wash the feet of his servants and disciples, was more singular and observable. In the breaking of bread, and giving of wine, it is not pleaded by our adversaries, nor yet mentioned in text, that he particularly put them into the hands of all ; but breaking it, and blessing it, gave it the nearest, and so they from hand to hand : but here it is mentioned, that he washed not the feet of one or two, but of many. He*

saith not in the *former*, that if they do not eat of that bread, and drink of that wine, they shall be prejudiced by it ; but here he saith expressly to *Peter*, that if he wash him not, he hath no part with him ; which being spoken upon *Peter's* refusing to let him wash his feet, would seem to import no less, than not the continuance only, but even the necessity of this ceremony. In the former he saith, as it were passingly, *Do this in remembrance of me* ; but here he sitteth down again, he desires them to consider what he hath done, tells them positively, that *as he hath done to them, so ought they to do to one another* : and yet again he redoubles that precept, by telling them, *he has given them an example, that they should do likewise*. If we respect the nature of the thing, it hath as much in it as either *baptism* or the *breaking of bread* ; seeing it is an outward element of a cleansing nature, applied to the outward man, by the command and the example of Christ, to signify an inward purifying. I would willingly propose this seriously to men, who will be pleased to make use of that reason and understanding that God hath given them, and not be imposed upon, nor abused by the custom or tradition of others ; *Whether this ceremony, if we respect either the time that it was appointed in, or the circumstances wherewith it was performed, or the command enjoining the use of it, hath not as much to recommend it for a standing ordinance of the gospel, as either water-baptism, or bread and wine, or any other of that kind ?*"

The command to "salute one another with a kiss," was positive, and often enjoined, yet modern Christians very properly disregard it ; though the primitive Christians observed it. See Bishop Lincoln on Tertullian.

## CHAPTER V.

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PLACES OF WORSHIP, INCONVENIENCE OF HOUSES,  
NIGHT MEETINGS, CAMP MEETINGS, PROTRACTED  
MEETINGS, RINGING OF BELLS.

### *Places of Worship.*

There is not perhaps any thing more beautiful in the scenery of New England, than the churches and spires that are seen in almost every town. They are generally built of wood, painted white, and impress the traveller with favorable ideas of the order and piety of the inhabitants around. I wish I could say that these churches are as comfortable for worshippers, as they are beautiful to the observer; but in truth they are not. In general they are poorly built, and badly keep out the cold of winter and the heat of summer. The seats, usually unsupplied with cushions, are very uncomfortable places to remain in, even for two or three hours. Many of these churches are placed upon the tops of hills, where they are exposed to the violence of wind and cold, unprotected by woods or rising ground. They have neither inside nor outside shutters to the windows, and as they are greatly lighted, the heat of a summer's sun is exceedingly oppressive.

But this can be better endured than the cold of winter. Within a very few years, however, this evil has

been greatly lessened, and many churches have had stoves placed in them, and are partially warmed ; but even now, I presume one quarter of the churches in New England, in the country towns, are destitute of any means of being warmed, and those thus unsupplied are the churches situated in the most bleak and cold places in the country. The suffering from this cause is great, and many lives, I have no doubt, have been sacrificed in consequence. In the early part of my life, I attended, for several years, one of the churches in Berkshire county, Massachusetts, in a town containing near 2000 inhabitants, many of whom lived from four to six miles from the church. The winters then were very severe, yet the church was every sabbath well filled ; many of the congregation coming from home as early as nine or ten o'clock in the morning, and remaining until nearly night, with but little food, and often not leaving the place of worship until the close of the afternoon services.

But though human suffering in such cases is severe, yet far greater is that of the horses, that convey the people to the church, and kept in the cold all day. It has always appeared to me surprising, that rest for beasts on the sabbath was not thought a more important duty by Christians, than it is ; a subject I shall again allude to. During the extreme cold weather of last winter, on a sabbath when the thermometer was several degrees below zero, I visited two of the towns adjoining Hartford ; in one of which I counted forty, and in the other, thirty horses, fastened around the churches, many of them unprotected by sheds or by blankets. I regarded it then as extreme cruelty, and now take the opportunity to say that it deserves severe reprehension, as being unmerciful

and unjustifiable abuse. Some may say, that people are obliged to ride, because the distance is so great ; but this is seldom the case. People in this country have unfortunately fostered a dislike to walking. No people in the world walk so little as the New Englanders—a matter of regret, as walking is a very useful exercise, beneficial to health. I hope therefore that those who are desirous of doing rightly, will consider this treatment of brutes, and one day in seven, allow them a day of rest, especially when nothing prevents but their own reluctance to walking a few miles. Houses of worship are usually much larger than are necessary, and much of the interior is not occupied with seats as it might be.

I should recommend that more care be taken to build churches well, with thick walls of brick or stone ; the latter is preferable, and being very abundant in most parts of this country, churches can be built of it for a less expense than of brick. The windows should be but few, and so constructed that they can be easily opened and shut, and they should have both inside and outside shutters or blinds. No doors should open from the outside directly into the church, but there should be a large ante-room, and in winter the doors should be well closed. The seats should be cushioned, the floor carpeted, and the house in winter, well warmed. Great care should be used to insure proper ventilation. In fine, more pains should be taken to make houses of worship comfortable, and thus comfort will contribute to a love of devotion, and the church will become a pleasant place of resort, instead of being, as it has often been, associated in the mind with much that is dreary and painful.

A good location is necessary, where the house will be

protected from bleak winds ; and all churches should be surrounded with a grove of shade trees. In the country, a number of small warm barns should be built around the churches, to protect the horses. Sheds open in front are not sufficiently warm for this purpose. Public opinion should not permit any man to leave a horse unprotected from the storm and cold, while he attends church.

### *Of Chapels, or Conference Rooms.*

There are other houses, besides churches, which are often used to worship in, and these are frequently very badly constructed and arranged. They are called chapels, or conference rooms ; sometimes a school-house is used, and often a room under the church serves for this purpose. In these places, evening meetings are frequently held, which are often greatly crowded. These rooms being poorly ventilated, the air soon becomes unwholesome. Instead of being too cold, they are too warm. I have often seen two or three hundred people crowded into a school-house of a winter's evening, all complaining of heat, and yet none of them putting on additional clothing when they went out. I have known much sickness caused by this practice, and if such meetings are to be continued, more care should be taken in this respect. All houses of worship should have an ante-room, fitted up to receive extra garments, to be put off and on, when going in or out of the meeting.

I deem this subject a very important one in this country. In most parts of New England, are numerous night meetings, both in winter and summer. They are attended by women—indeed, to my observation more women than men—and especially of the younger

portion of this sex, attend them. It is this class that are more particularly disposed to consumption and complaints of the lungs. I have no doubt a great number of cases of this kind may be traced to the erroneous customs of which I have spoken.

Clergymen in this country are very unhealthy; a great many suffer from inflammation about the throat, which in several instances I have known to originate from preaching in over-heated houses, and then going into the cold air.

### *Night Meetings.*

By night meetings, I mean those which are holden for religious purposes, and now frequent in almost every town in the northern States of this Union.

This frequency is, however, of modern origin. Forty years since, as I have been informed by aged clergymen, religious meetings in the evening were almost unknown; but now most of the Calvinistic, Methodist and Baptist churches in New England, and in the Northern and Middle States, have two, three or more meetings in the evening every week, and for aught I know, this practice is prevalent in the Southern and Western States also. What are called Monthly Concerts for prayer, meetings to hear accounts of, or to aid the Bible, Missionary, Tract, Education, Seamen, Colonization, Abolition, and other charitable and religious Societies, are usually held in the evening, and most, if not all, the churches, have every week, one or more conference or prayer meetings in the evening. Whenever there is any topic which is, or can be made, interesting or exciting, as for instance, the subject of slavery, of temperance, the sufferings, real

or supposed, of our Indians, or of the Greeks; the churches are opened in the evening, for itinerant lecturers on these topics, and multitudes flock to hear them.

I do not exaggerate when I say that more than one half the evenings in the year, the churches in this region, or the conference rooms connected with them, are open and filled with men, women and children. Most of these meetings are in small and crowded houses, and generally a majority of the congregation are females. They continue usually about two hours, sometimes, however, much longer. (*l*) One other fact important to state, is, that many of those who are most regular in their attendance on these meetings at the church where they usually worship, also attend the evening meetings at other churches. Thus I have often known instances, of females particularly, attending at their own church one evening, at another the next, and at a third and a fourth church, on other evenings in the same week. This, to be sure, may have been on extraordinary occasions; a negro was to preach, or a very popular clergyman, or one they had never heard before, or one from a great town, or a great distance, or who had been to China, or to Africa, or among the Indians, or in prison, or in some way had made himself notable among a portion of the religious community.

None will question the facts above stated, for none can have failed of observing them, for several years in this region; and every one will admit that such a course may be greatly injurious to health. Reason and observation will convince any candid person that there is danger in continuing such practices; and still there are no

(*l*) Some have lasted all night, at camp and protracted meetings.

facts to show the great importance or the necessity of adopting such a course of conduct. Every one must see, too, that it is encouraging a kind of theatre-going spirit, i. e. a love of excitement, incompatible with a love of domestic life and patient study and research at home.

But I have the evidence of my own observation, that it is injurious to health, particularly of females. Some of them who have been frequent attendants on evening meetings, have told me they have themselves noticed that their health had been affected, and a tendency to nervous diseases increased by this course. And as I have hinted, the health is greatly endangered by going into these meetings which are usually crowded, and when the air is vitiated and hot, and then going directly into the cold, after the meeting, without any additional clothing, as is usually the case. I have known sickness caused by such procedure, and have known some females thus ruin their health.

But there are other objections to these meetings, founded on the influence of the night, or night air, upon the human system. It is a fact mentioned by numerous medical writers, (*m*) that the night aggravates diseases, and that then the tendency to disease is increased. All catarrhal affections, all disorders of the head, and nervous and hysterical diseases are increased at evening, as likewise the tendency to apoplexy and palsy. It is therefore requisite that those who are at all disposed to such complaints, or who may wish to avoid them, should be particularly careful to pass the hours of evening, previous to retiring to sleep, quietly at home. Of two females, both

(*m*) Ramazzini, Huxham, Pringle, Virey, &c.

equally healthy, one, who remains at home unexcited, would remain well, while the other, by attending evening meetings several times a week, would become nervous, and ultimately such an invalid as to be unfitted for labor, or for the duties of a mother. The cause would be the excitement of the mind in the evening, an excitement frequently of a terrific, or at least, not of a pleasurable nature, which operating on the nervous system, would dispose to sleeplessness, or disturbed rest, and ultimately would injure the health.

The danger to be apprehended from taking cold, by thus frequenting evening meetings, and of laying the foundation of that most formidable of all our diseases, consumption, is so obvious that I need only allude to it. From observation I know that the practice is injurious to the health, particularly of females, and all of delicate systems and of nervous temperaments; and believe that parents and guardians should be extremely careful to guard those committed to their care against this danger.

No one will pretend that these meetings are enjoined upon Christians by the Bible, and surely reason does not sanction them. No information, or any thing of use, can be obtained at them which might not as well be obtained at home; except the excitement, which instead of being useful, is dangerous. Besides, they have the effect to discourage reading and calm inquiry. I have known people all anxiety to hear a man who had visited China or some other country, give a lecture describing the places he had visited; yet these persons had never taken pains to inform themselves respecting those countries, by reading any of the full and authentic accounts of them, to be found in numerous books.

An occasional meeting in the evening is not very objectionable, and I certainly should not have alluded to the subject, were they not exceedingly frequent. Many of the meetings held in the evening for the transaction of business had better be held during the day. Others had better be relinquished, and the people told by the clergy to stay at home and read for themselves, on the subject they wish to investigate; and instead of setting apart more evenings for particular religious purposes,—as for instance, one for a Sabbath school concert of prayer, another to pray for the heathen, and others for something else, under the plea that it will have a powerful effect for all Christendom to pray at the same hour, let them reflect that much in this way the numerous festivals and other foolish observances of the Roman Catholic Church originated.<sup>(n)</sup>

Every one knows that attendance on theatres and balls is injurious to health. That hundreds of females lose their lives, from complaints produced by attending them, few will doubt. Though I consider dancing to be a beneficial exercise, and wish it were more general in private houses, yet public balls, continued to a late hour of the night, are in many respects dangerous. Attendance on theatres may not be as injurious to the body, but it is usually profitless if not dangerous to the mind. I mean, however, those theatres of this country and England, at which many of the plays performed are often indecent and vulgar, and tend to excite the worst propensities.

<sup>(n)</sup> I do not mean to deny that many of the festivals of the Christian Church, before the inventions of printing, were serviceable, by affording opportunities for instructing the populace in religious truth; though I am aware that many of them were derived from very ancient customs prevailing in Egypt, Persia and India,

But I consider theatres and balls as less injurious to the health of the people of this country than religious night meetings ; because attendance on the former is far less frequent. Probably not more than one female out of two or three hundred attends a ball in a year, or at the most not more than three or four ; and of the same number, not more than four or five go to the theatre more than half a dozen times in a season, and these are confined to the large towns. But throughout the whole community, at least 25, if not 50 out of one hundred females, between the ages of 15 and 50, attend religious meetings at least 100 or 150 nights in a year.

In conclusion, I consider the great prevalence of night meetings, and the tendency to an increase of them, as dangerous and alarming, and as calling for the reprehension of all who wish well to their fellow-creatures. I would particularly appeal to the intelligent and influential clergy ; I cannot doubt but they view the subject much as I do, for I have heard that some of them thus express themselves ; though they justified their own conduct in having them, by saying there was no other way to keep their congregations together, that other churches had them, and such was the desire of attending, that the people would seek them out.

### *Of Camp Meetings.*

By Camp meetings, I mean meetings of numerous individuals, out of doors, usually in the woods, for the purpose of devoting themselves for several successive days and nights to prayer, and to attendance on other

religious exercises. These meetings derive their name from the fact that the people who attend them, *camp out*, in tents which they erect for the purpose, where they live and lodge during the meeting, which usually continues from five to seven days.

Such meetings are of very ancient origin, and have been known among people of various religions. The devotees of Egypt and India have from time immemorial been accustomed to assemble in vast multitudes, and pitch their tents, in which they live for several successive days, devoting themselves to religious exercises. But the Christian sect called Methodists, though they did not, even among Christians, commence *camp* meetings, have of late resorted to them in this country, far more than any other denomination.<sup>(o)</sup> I have attended several of the Methodist camp meetings, and have had full accounts of others, and am enabled to say that usually a large concourse of people of both sexes are present,—that some kind of religious service, either praying, singing, or preaching, is attended to most of the time during the day, often far into the night, and sometimes through the night,—and that the accommodations in the tents, especially for females, are bad.

A writer in "Zion's Herald, (a religious paper, published at Boston, under the patronage of the New England Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church,) says—"It is now (1824,) about twenty three years since the Methodists in this country began to hold camp meetings, and to keep a feast unto the Lord in the wil-

<sup>(o)</sup> The Presbyterians formerly advocated them, then for a while condemned them, but of late some Presbyterian churches in this country have again resorted to them.

derness." Since then, these meetings have been very common, the Methodists believing them to be of great utility. To give the reader an accurate idea of these meetings, I will quote a few accounts of them from the Methodist papers and magazines. In Zion's herald for Sept. 15th, 1824, is the following account of one, in a letter to the editor, which was holden in Lyndon, Vermont.

"DEAR BROTHER,

"With pleasure I transmit the following account of the camp meeting which commenced at Lyndon, Vt., 31st of August. The weather appeared the first two days rather unfavorable, "But behind a frowning Providence, He hid a smiling face." In answer to the united prayer of his people, the clouds dispersed, and a smiling sun cheered both earth and sky. It has been doubted whether a clear sky would have been more beneficial, or that the meeting would have been more successful; our brethren were young, and principally unacquainted with the usages of camp meetings:—during the rainy season, they became disciplined in the tents to the important duty of prayer; and the effectual fervent prayer of God's people effected much. We cannot say this was the greatest meeting of the kind ever known; but we can say it was the best we ever witnessed. We hardly had a poor sermon upon the occasion. I should be happy, had I room, to give you the heads of all the sermons. There were a large number of brethren upon the ground—48 tents, and some of them unusually large—perhaps 3000 or 3500 was the greatest number on the ground.

"The introductory prayer, offered by Br. J. Lord, in which he consecrated to God the ground, the tents, the

preachers, and the brethren, and all connected with the encampment, was truly interesting and solemn. Having been dedicated to God, we gave ourselves unto him and one another, and went about the great business for which we came together. And truly our labor was not in vain in the Lord. The first evening was crowned with six souls under deep awakenings; but the revival was more powerful the next day and evening;—we had good reason to believe fifteen were brought into the liberty of the sons of God. The spirit of the Lord in the encampment was like leaven—the grain of mustard seed put forth and became a tree. Thursday was to us truly an interesting day: between twenty and thirty gave hopeful evidence of their conversion to God. Friday was to us the day of God. It was ‘the last day of the feast;’ and ‘Jesus stood and cried,’—nor did he in vain—eighty mourning penitents came to the altar for prayers: and glory be to God in the highest, there was joy with the angels in the conversion of sinners. We had reason to hope that not far from forty were brought to rejoice in the pardoning love of God. Some of the conversions were remarkably bright and clear. I witnessed one in particular, a young man about twenty, who apparently was deprived of all his strength, and in this situation, under the greatest anguish of mind, apparently in a moment, in answer to prayer, was made a trophy of victorious grace. He was unable to express in words what he felt within; but with a countenance that beamed with heavenly joy, he cheered the hearts of his friends, till he was able to express what the Lord had done for his soul. In the presence of this convert, infidelity and skepticism disappeared like dew before the burning sun. The work continued during the night, in a most cheer-

ing and glorious manner. During this encampment, it was not necessary to call the preachers together for council but once; such was the good decorum observed by the brethren and the people at large. It may be proper to notice that in the preacher's meeting, after the choice of a secretary and brethren to assist Br. Fisk in selecting and appointing the preachers to officiate, and the time of the day they should preach, and some other appointments, usual on such occasions, the preachers unanimously agreed to request Br. Fisk to desire the brethren publicly to appoint the prayer-meeting in each other's tents alternately, and that one brother or sister should lead in prayer vocally, and the others follow mentally, except in responding the amen. The good effects of this advice were seen in every part of the encampment, with but few exceptions. The exercise for preaching, the public and tent prayer meetings, could not have been conducted with more decency and order. A breathless silence generally reigned. If interrupted, it was by the penitent crying 'God be merciful to me a sinner,' or, with the 3000 on the day of Pentecost, 'men and brethren, what shall we do?'

"The faith of God's people was great; they asked and received, and their joy was full. Scores of souls were converted while the brethren were in the exercise of prayer for them. I am with respect, yours &c.

T. C. PIERCE."

In the same paper of June 23d, 1824, is an account of one holden at Westmoreland, New Hampshire. It was commenced on Sunday. Monday was mostly spent in building 15 tents which were dedicated by prayer in the evening. Forty clergymen were present, and about 2500 persons. Nineteen sermons were

preached during the week of the encampment. The phraseology of the following sentence, added by the writer of the account, were it not for the gravity of the subject, would seem truly ludicrous. He says—"Some will expect a statement of the number of hopeful converts. Of this I can only say we probably had a *score* or *two* of souls brought to Christ."

Some of the published accounts of these meetings are given in far more glowing, mystical and extravagant language;—like the following, in a letter to the editor of Zion's Herald.

"SIR,

"The following is a brief account of a camp, holden on Penobscot district, in the town of Bucksport, which began on Monday, the 6th of September, 1824.

Owing to inclement weather, there were but few collected on the day appointed for our meeting to commence. In the evening, Br. Eaton preached from 2 Tim. ii. 3. The Lord was present, and some of the elder brethren observed, that they never saw the commencement of a camp meeting attended with more gracious omens.

"Tuesday morning, our brethren from various parts were seen preparing their tents, like men of war, with hearts big with expectation. At 10 o'clock, Br. Greely preached, while the Lord refreshed his people. At 2 o'clock, Br. Douglas preached from Isaiah. lxi. 1. The word was attended with divine energy, and children of the light were greatly rejoiced, in hope of the glory of God. The ministers of God appeared to be entering deeply into the good work, and the brethren through the whole circle of tents engaged in solemn prayer to Almighty God; while 'Lord sanctify my soul,' was

heard from every part of the encampment. At 7 o'clock in the evening, Br. Burgess preached from Eph. i. 18. The word was enforced with energy. The power of God, we believe, was generally realized in our prayer-meetings in the several tents.

“Notwithstanding the rain fell quite fast, and made it very inconvenient as to outward things, on Wednesday morning, the light was saluted with the voice of singing and prayer. At 8 o'clock, Br. Ayer spoke from James v. 17, 18. Before the exercise closed, the power of the Lord was revealed in a glorious manner, and there appeared to be a great moving in the congregation. We had public preaching again at 10 o'clock, and in truth the windows of heaven were opened, and the Lord visited his people by giving them manna to the full. Br. Kellogg preached from Mark, i. 40, 41. Numbers were made sensible of their leprosy, and came forward for prayers. At 2 o'clock, Br. Lull preached from Coll. iii. 2. Great solemnity rested upon every countenance; and convictions appeared to be multiplying.

Thursday, at 8 o'clock, Br. Bray preached from Matt. xxii. 23. A very precious season it was; the people of God were overwhelmed with a sense of God's amazing goodness. At 10 o'clock, Br. Baker preached from Isaiah lii. 11, 12. It was a time of trembling and self-examination. At 2 o'clock, Br. Lovell broke the bread of life, from Prov. i. 24, 25, 26, to a very large congregation. After the close of this exercise, a praying circle was formed, at the request of the preachers, on the left of the preachers, on the left of the stand, to make prayer to Almighty God for sanctifying grace; victory was realized; the work of grace was deepened

in believer's hearts, while the slain of the Lord strewed the ground. In the evening, Br. Hall preached from Matt. xvii. 4. It was good to be here. 'Salvation flowed like floods of milk and wine.' We doubt whether such shouts of praise were ever witnessed before, on the banks of the Penobscot. Prayers, without intermission, were ascending to God, from some of the tents, during the whole night.

"At 8 o'clock on Friday morning the trumpet sounded for the last public exercise at the stand. Br. Hutchinson discoursed from 1 Peter, iv. 7,—and a melting season it was—the tear trembled in almost every eye. The parting scene was truly affecting; none but those whose hearts burn with the love of David and Jonathan, can realize it; many scores of brethren, with burning hearts and streaming eyes, bidding adieu to each other. Some never to meet again on earth—never to meet again till they meet in the paradise of God.

"We think we have sufficient authority to state, that rising of twenty souls were savingly converted to God at this meeting. We mean such as were never before converted, and such as have been once converted and had grossly back-slidden. We believe these are only the first fruits of the meeting; the harvest is yet behind, much precious seed lies scattered through the neighboring towns and villages; which, if warmed by the sun of righteousness, and moistened with the dew of heaven, will bring forth, 'some thirty, some sixty, and some an hundred fold.'

STEPHEN WARDWELL, *Sec'y of meeting.*"

I have remarked that camp meetings have become numerous in this country, especially of late years, and I have

no doubt that the sect of Methodists has been greatly increased by them. "It cannot be denied," says one, *(p)* "that camp meetings have generally been owned and blessed of the Lord."

The Rev. Thomas Madden, in the American Methodist Magazine, July, 1825, says—"In America, perhaps, no single means has been more successfully used for the awakening and conversion of sinners, than camp meetings." I quote this remark to show that these meetings had become very popular about 1824-5, and were supposed to be adding rapidly to the number of the Methodists; and I am of opinion that they gave rise to very similar meetings of other religious sects, known by the name of "four days meetings," or "protracted meetings," which have since become very common among the Presbyterians, Calvinists and Baptists, and which will be noticed in the next section.

It appears to me it was evident to all who attended to the subject, that the Methodists were rapidly gaining on the other religious denominations in this country, by these meetings. Other sects, especially those just mentioned, who had heretofore condemned camp meetings, could not consistently resort to them now, and therefore substituted protracted meetings, which commenced about 1826-7, and are similar in all respects but the encamping.

Surely I need not say one word to any reflecting and candid person, to convince him that camp meetings are likely to prove injurious to health. Necessarily, there must be great exposure to cold and rain, to sudden changes of temperature, and to bad air, in crowded

tents. That meals will be irregular and sleep disturbed, is also a necessary result ; while great excitement of the mind is expected and desired. On this subject, however, I have positive proof, as I have professionally attended several persons who were made sick, they themselves were convinced, by attending camp meetings ; and I have heard of very many others.(*q*) Large assemblies of human beings thus crowded together for several days, have always been known to be dangerous to health, and often give rise to alarming epidemics. The Asiatic cholera appeared first, in its most dreadful form, in 1783, at Hudwar, on the Ganges, among a vast multitude of devotees who had been assembled several days, on occasion of a religious festival.(*r*)

In warm countries, however, where there are no comfortable houses of worship, as was the case in Palestine, in the time of the Apostles, meetings for religious purposes in the open air might be proper ; and if not very large, nor long protracted, and discontinued in the night, might not prove injurious to the health.(*s*) In a new country, where no churches have been built and preachers are scarce, larger assemblies, and of longer

(*q*) One of the most deplorable cases of insanity I have ever witnessed, appeared to have been caused in a young lady by attending a camp meeting. In her case, there was no hereditary tendency, nor had there been any symptoms, previous to her attending the meeting, of this disease that finally ruined her.

(*r*) Bengal Report on the Cholera.

(*s*) Though Whitfield and Wesley are by many supposed to have been the first who preached in the open air, and I believe, they were themselves of this opinion, yet this is a mistake. St. Nicholas of Nolans, St. Anthony of Padua, St. Ignatius, and others, were accustomed to preach to vast multitudes in the open air. St. Nicholas claimed that he was directed to this course by a voice from heaven, saying—"this is not the place I would have thee to go ;—go forth into the field and preach to men !"

continuance might be excusable ; but no reason can be given for their adoption and continuance in this part of the U. States, except that thus crowding together in great numbers, and listening to exciting discourses, affects the mind and agitates the body. Scripture does not sanction them, reason must condemn them, and experience shows them to be dangerous both to body and mind. I hope, therefore, that leading and influential men of the Methodist connexion, will examine the subject carefully, and I have no doubt they will agree with me, that camp meetings ought to be abandoned or greatly modified.

### *Of Protracted Meetings.*

By *protracted meetings*, I mean religious meetings of several days continuance ; sometimes called in this part of the country, *four days meetings*. As I have said, they are similar in all respects except the *camping out*, to the camp meetings of the Methodists.

When they commenced, I am unable to say. The Rev. Charles G. Finney, (*t*) says—“ They have always been practised in some form or other, ever since there was a church on earth ; that the Jewish festivals were nothing else but protracted meetings—the manner was different, but the design was the same.” Some, probably, will venture to doubt this statement ; it is, however, a matter of very little consequence. I have shown in another place, that prolonged religious meetings have been common in different ages of the world, and in different religions. The celebrated quaker, George Fox, men-

(*t*) Lectures on Revivals of Religion, p. 242.

tions in his journal, of attending them in his day. But modern protracted meetings were commenced in this country, I believe about the year 1827. Since then, they have been very numerous, especially in the Calvinistic churches. (u) I am of opinion that they have been resorted to for the purpose of producing religious excitement, by more than one half of the Calvinistic and Presbyterian churches in the Northern States of this country. They have not, however, been uniformly of four days continuance, but often much longer, and some have been continued forty days. One in this city was protracted nearly that time. Sometimes the churches in the same city, or in adjoining towns, hold them in succession, and many\* individuals, especially the most zealous and most excited, attend all of them. The exercises at these meetings vary in different churches, even of the same creed; for it must not be concealed that there is great disagreement in opinion among the Calvinistic clergy, respecting the proper manner of conducting these meetings, as well as upon other measures for producing and promoting revivals of religion. Generally they are conducted much as follows:—first, prayer meetings or inquiry meetings, early in the morning,—then preaching, praying and singing in the forenoon,—in the afternoon, another sermon, with prayers and singing,—in the evening, a third sermon, praying, singing, exhortation, and examination of those called “anxious,” or “awakened.”

There was one of these meetings holden in this city in 1833, in the Calvinistic Free Church, under the pastoral care of Rev. W. C. Walton, since deceased. The

(u) By *Calvinistic*, I mean the Congregational Orthodox

following is extracted from an account given of it by the Rev. Samuel Spring, then pastor of another Calvinistic church in this city, to a Rev. brother in New-York, and published in the Albany Journal and Telegraph.

“MY DEAR BROTHER,

“You ask for an ‘account of the transactions at the Free church in the installation of Mr. Walton.’

\* \* \*

“Immediately after the installation, a protracted meeting commenced, which has continued to the present time and is still in progress. This is the 23d or 24th day of the meeting. Dr. L. and Mr. N. from your city, were the only preachers for the first week. After Dr. L. left, Mr. N. labored alone till Mr. K. came, and since he returned home. Mr. C. also from New-York, has been preaching. Excepting one service, perhaps two, from Mr. W., when no other preacher of their own school was on the ground, the gentlemen above named have exclusively occupied the pulpit.”

\* \* \* \*

The measures, in connection with the preaching have been such as are usually resorted to by ministers of this class at protracted meetings. Such as inviting persons in the congregation to rise, who desired prayers for their conversion ; calling upon those who were impressed to take the ‘anxious seat ;’ classifying and separating the congregation at different times under the names of the covenanting, the anxious, the young converts, &c. ; encouraging at the prayer meetings those who had impenitent relatives, to send in notes or prefer verbal requests aloud, for their conversion ; and many other equally exceptionable things which I did not witness. I attended the meetings regularly from their commencement till the close of the second day ; when, after the church, and some

others from the neighboring churches had renewedly pledged themselves to lives of greater devotedness than before, Mr. W. came forward and renewed his vows of ministerial fidelity, and called upon all ministers present, (without having giving them any premonition of his purpose) to concur with him in the act."

The Rev. Mr. Spring hereupon left the meeting, which he did not again attend, and says, he "unhesitatingly avows his disapprobation of the whole system as unscriptural, as unwarrantable machinery, liable to great abuse." "The results, (he observes,) so far as developed, have been contention, bitterness, alienation and lasting disorders I fear in our churches. That some good has been done, perhaps we ought not to question. Many conversions are spoken of as having occurred, say from fifty to one hundred. Many of them are children."

Another was held not long after in this city, in the Calvinistic church under the pastoral charge of the Rev. Joel Hawes, D. D. I have seen no minute account of it published, nor do I know what effect it produced. It commenced on the 27th of January, and continued until the second of February; most of the time being occupied in singing, praying, preaching and exhorting. There were three sermons daily, preceded by prayer meetings.

The following more full account of one at Buffalo, in the State of New York, will give the reader a good idea of these meetings, as they have been conducted in most places, and where they have been considered most beneficial. It is given by the Rev. T. H. Martin, pastor of the church in which it was holden :

*“Protracted Meeting.*

“On Tuesday, the 24th, a Protracted Meeting commenced. The first day was observed as a day of fasting and prayer. It was a season of much heart searching, and deep humiliation before God, on the part of many of the members of the church.

“In the afternoon, the Rev. J. Burchard, who had previously been invited to assist in the meeting, made a short address, eminently calculated to show Christians the weight of their covenant vows, their entire dependence on the influence of the Holy Spirit, and to prepare them to labor successfully in the work of the Lord.

“In the evening of the same day, Mr. B. preached his first sermon, to a crowded house, which was evidently accompanied by the Divine Spirit to the awakening of many. At the close of the services, a meeting of inquiry was appointed to be held at 10 o'clock the next morning, in the basement story of the church, where several individuals attended, and hopefully surrendered their hearts to the supremacy of Jesus Christ.

“With a few exceptions, Mr. Burchard preached in the afternoon and evening, till the close of the meeting, which continued forty-one days.

“The interest continued to increase, and the work to become more and more powerful, until the excitement became general, and extended to every part of the city. The Holy Spirit descended in mighty power, sweeping down the errorist and the infidel, and bringing them to the feet of Jesus, clothed and in their right mind.

“From about the 10th to the 21st day of the meeting the anxious room was crowded, and hundreds were found indulging the hope that they had passed from

death unto life. For several days there were from twenty to thirty a day, who professed to submit their hearts to God. About the 21st day of the meeting the work reached its climax, and from that time was less powerful; though there were from ten to fifteen hopeful conversions daily, till we were obliged, in consequence of fatigue and ill health, to lessen our labors, and draw the meeting to a close.

“Owing to the bad state of the roads, there being no sleighing, few attended from the country; still the meeting was well sustained during the entire period; the house being usually well filled in the afternoon, and crowded in the evening. Frequently the crowd was so great that professing Christians retired to the basement story for prayer, and hundreds were obliged to go away, unable to find seats.

“The closing sermon, on the eternal Deity of Christ, was, by request, preached in the first Presbyterian Church, a very large house, to an immense congregation, and the general impression among the friends of truth and revivals, was, that could the meeting have been continued in that house, with the assistance of brother Burchard, the moral aspect of the whole city would have been changed, and hundreds, if not thousands more, been born into the kingdom.

“*Doctrines.*

“The doctrines taught, were the doctrines inculcated by such men as Dwight, Davies, Edwards and Bellamy, and the Fathers of the Congregational and Presbyterian Churches. They were what are usually denominated the doctrines of Grace. They were Calvinistic.

*“ Measures.*

“ The measures adopted in this meeting were, with one or two exceptions, such as are generally employed in protracted meetings in different sections of the Presbyterian church.

“ In the morning we had several prayer meetings, and a meeting of inquiry. At 2 o'clock, P. M., and also in the evening, there was public preaching. This course was pursued, with few variations, to the close of the meeting. The sermon in the afternoon was addressed to Christians, and in the evening to sinners. After the evening discourse, all who felt willing to submit their hearts to God, and all who wished an interest in the prayers of God's people, were requested to come forward and take the front seats. Usually from one to three hundred came forward. After receiving a few words of instruction, designed to lead them to immediate repentance, they were commended to God in prayer. At the close of the meeting, they were invited to be present the next morning, and to bring as many impenitent sinners with them as they could persuade to come. The meeting of inquiry was the place of our most laborious and successful efforts. It was the special object of prayer in all morning prayer meetings. It was emphatically the scene of the Holy Ghost; the place where hundreds were slain by the law, and made alive in Christ.

“ Few, it is believed, entered that room who did not feel that they were in a solemn place. Here the doctrines of salvation, preached from the pulpit, were presented to each individual singly, and urged home to his conscience. Our manner was thus: We came to the anxious room from our closets, where we had agonized in

prayer for the gift of the Holy Spirit, (Luke xi. 1, 13;) without which we expected to accomplish nothing. Resting upon the immutability of the divine promise, we went to the sinner with the confident expectation of success. We felt, and endeavored to make him feel, that we were the servants of Jesus Christ—that we came to him with a message from God; and that as he received or rejected us; (Matt. x. 40,) so he received or rejected Christ. With these views and feelings, we laid our message before him; and having opened and explained its several parts, we urged him, as a condemned rebel, on the eve of execution, immediately to accept the conditions of life—to submit, honestly and unconditionally, his heart to God.

“It was thus we labored, from ten, or half past ten, till one o’clock, with the inquirers individually, until we had conversed with all, or nearly all, in the room. We then called those forward to the front seats who had promised to submit their hearts to God. They were then addressed collectively; and the character of God and his claims; their obligations; their guilt, the conditions of salvation, and the duty of immediate and unconditional submission, were explained under a great variety of illustrations. These instructions were followed by earnest prayer to God that they might not lie to the Holy Ghost, or be left to a deceived heart; but that he would give them that repentance which needeth not to be repented of, and seal them the heirs of eternal salvation.

“The names of those who professed to have surrendered their hearts to God, were taken down, not as proof that we considered them converted, but to aid the pastor in his future visits and instructions. The object in tak-

ing the names was frequently announced, that it might not be mistaken.

“The number of names thus taken during the meeting was, of adults, more than 500, of children over 100 ; (v) making in all, more than 600 who *professed* to submit their hearts to God ; and solemnly covenanted to take the Bible as the rule of their faith and practice, and to follow Christ all the days of their lives. How many of these will be found among the genuine followers of the Lamb when he makes up his jewels, the Judgment of the great day will disclose.

“It may be proper here to state, that, at the commencement of public service, an opportunity was usually given for Christians, and anxious sinners, and young converts, to ask prayers for themselves and their friends.

“As this was a *new measure* in Buffalo, it excited, at first, some opposition even among Christians ; and was made the subject of much ridicule and blasphemy, among infidels and scoffers. But it was a measure sig-

“(v) In the early part of the meeting the children were collected in a large room, procured for the purpose, and subsequently in the basement story of the Presbyterian church, and were committed to the special instruction of Mrs. Burchard ; who, together with a few other ladies, devoted her time almost exclusively to this department of labor. The result was as above stated ; the hopeful conversion of more than 100 of their number. So far as the knowledge of the writer extends, they appear remarkably well. They are not men and women, neither are they perfect ; though this is the standard by which most Christians judge of the piety of children ; a standard by which they would by no means wish to be tried themselves. Since the close of our meeting, a few of them have held a weekly prayer meeting at the house of the Pastor of the Free Church. Their prayers exhibit a knowledge of the Scriptures, and of their own hearts, and a depth of pious feeling, which few can witness without tears. But had there been no children converted, principles have been inculcated and an interest awakened upon the subject in this city, by the labors of Mrs. B. which will tell, it is believed, on the salvation of thousands yet unborn.”

nally owned and blessed of God. It led Christians to search their hearts; to inquire into the nature and degree of their faith in the truth of the promises of God's word.

“This inquiry led to the detection of much *infidelity* in relation to the guilt and wretchedness of their unconverted relatives and friends, and of much *practical unbelief* in the promises of God and the efficacy of prayer.

“The result was, in many cases, deep repentance before God, stronger faith in the truth of his declarations, a more ardent spirit of prayer, and increased efforts for the conversion of the impenitent around them. They were now seen laboring for the salvation of souls like men in earnest. They looked, and talked, and acted, and prayed, as though they believed there was a heaven, and a hell. They no longer staggered at the promises, but, “took God at his word.” They first carried their requests to their closets, and then brought them to the sanctuary. They went forth weeping, bearing precious seed, and soon returned again, rejoicing, bringing their sheaves with them. Parents, who in the evening requested the prayers of God's people for the conversion of their children, came forward the next day with thanksgiving, that these prayers were answered. Wives and husbands, who requested prayers for their unconverted companions, had the happiness of hearing them, shortly after, ask prayers for themselves, that their faith in Christ might be strengthened. Never have I witnessed so many striking instances of manifest answers to prayer as in this meeting. One brother in the church brought forward a request, in the early part of the meeting, in behalf of seven impenitent friends. And before

the meeting closed, five of them were found hoping that they had passed from death unto life. A sister in the church had a list of twenty-five individuals whom she presented day and night, and before the close of the meeting twenty-four of them were hopefully converted.

“ Another member of the church requested prayers for an impenitent friend in Connecticut. He was told to write him immediately, and urge him to attend to the subject of his soul’s salvation. He wrote as requested. A few days after the close of our meeting he received an answer ; stating, that his brother was converted to God, and had united with the church since the receipt of his letter. There was no revival in the place. The church was in a cold state, and no other individual was known to have been converted, or even serious. A sister residing in a neighborhood about five miles from the city, in which there was no church, no religious society, no house of worship, no preaching, except occasional, and but a very few professors of religion, requested prayers for that people, that they might be born into the kingdom of Christ. This neighborhood was the subject of special prayer. At the time, this sister knew of no human instrumentality, by which that neighborhood could be reached. A few days after the close of our meeting, the writer of this narrative was requested to hold a protracted meeting there. The meeting was held, and resulted in the hopeful conversion of about forty souls ; nearly all the adult population who were not previously professors.

“ Other striking examples might be given ; but these are sufficient to show the wavering and the doubtful, that the God of Jacob and the God of Daniel still hears and answers the prayers of his people.

“ *Admissions to the Church.* ”

“ The latter part of the meeting was chiefly occupied in giving instructions to the converts, and examining them in reference to admission to the church. This occupied several days. They were assembled in the basement story of the church in the afternoon, where, in a familiar manner, the doctrines and duties of Christianity, and the whole length and breadth of Christian experience, were discussed and explained, under a great variety of striking illustrations, till the whole was made intelligible to the youngest and most inexperienced. After this they were examined ; and such as gave us good and satisfactory evidence of piety, and felt it their duty and privilege to unite with our church, were received. The ordinance of the supper was administered on the two succeeding Sabbaths. At the first communion we admitted ninety-five—forty-two of whom I baptized. At the second, twenty-three ; making an aggregate of one hundred and eighteen.”—*N. Y. Evangelist, Oct. 4th, 1834.*

It appears to me there is not an intelligent and candid person in this country, but will acknowledge that thus assembling men, women and children, and talking to them, exciting them, and making them anxious and disturbed for days and weeks, on any other subject than religion, would be likely to prove injurious to their health. How then can any one doubt that continued mental agony on the subject of religion, is not as dangerous as similar excitement upon any other subject ; or suppose that people are more likely to escape disease, if exposed to its causes when attending religious meetings, than they would be if similarly exposed by attending theatres, balls, or assemblies of any other kind ?

No one who has attended the religious meetings under consideration, or who has read accounts of them in religious periodicals, will say they are not powerfully exciting, and productive of great mental distress. Indeed this is what the conductors of these meetings seek to produce, and what is published as evidence of their utility, and of the operation of the Holy Spirit. The most careful narrators of the proceedings at these meetings, and of the effects which they produce, mention the "unusual excitement," the "great solemnity," the "tears and groans," the "audible sighing and sobbing,"—"weeping aloud in the sanctuary,"—"trembling and turning pale,"—of "despair," &c. And then of "relief from suffering," of "joy and rejoicing," of "glowing and burning with holy love," &c. &c. Those who become excited and agitated, are called "the mourners," "the anxious," "the alarmed," or by other names, significant of their disturbed minds. Other accounts given of these meetings, when conducted by the more zealous, or what are called *new measure men*, represent them to be exceedingly exciting. These accounts, however, I shall again allude to in another place.

But if there were no danger to health, arising from this excitement and anxiety of mind, there surely must be from the bodily labor and fatigue in thus attending church, early in the morning, most of the day, and late in the evening, days and weeks in succession, exposed to variable weather, a vitiated atmosphere, and sudden and great changes of temperature, by going from heated, crowded rooms, into the open air. It would, indeed, be very remarkable if the health of many was not affected by such conduct.

Those who take an active part in the exercises, are

very often made sick by their unceasing toil and excitement. Hence we hear clergymen complain of being "worn out,"—"broke down,"—and "exhausted," by their labors at such times, and during what are called revivals of religion, when meetings are always greatly multiplied. It is a singular, and to many a very mysterious fact, that most of the Calvinistic clergymen in this country are sickly. This arises, I presume, in part, from their sedentary habits, and also from their gloomy and peculiar religious views; (*w*) yet I believe it is often caused by their preaching, praying, declaiming and exhorting most of the time. This, together with their mental anxiety, affects the nervous system, and causes much of the dyspepsia common among them, as I am led to believe by inquiry and reflection. When we consider their labor, not only on the sabbath, but during the week, especially in the evening, and their constant exertions at protracted meetings, and at numerous religious and charitable societies, we surely need not wonder that they are unhealthy. Their predecessors in the ministry were healthy, though they preached twice on the sabbath, and occasionally, though very seldom, in the evening or during the week; but they knew nothing of protracted meetings and numerous other meetings that now require much labor from clergymen.

I have known several cases of severe disease, which I believe originated from attending protracted meetings; and several cases of insanity, which appeared to have

(*w*) Hufeland, and many other distinguished medical writers, mention that a cheerful and calm state of mind is essential to the enjoyment of good health, or to the attainment of old age. But that the clergy who advocate these protracted meetings, &c., are much of the time, "anxious," "troubled," "grieved," &c. &c., they themselves state.

the same cause, have fallen under my observation. An examination of the case books of the lunatic establishments in New England, will confirm this statement. I surely do not intend to say that a great number, or a majority of those who attend a protracted meeting, will be likely to become sick or crazy. Most of those who attend are in good health, and are not easily affected or made sick, even by a course of conduct that is injurious to them; just as men will long appear well while using alcoholic drinks, though it ultimately ruins the constitution. (x) The mental excitement of others who are not healthy, and of delicate women and children, may carry them through, and apparently in very good health. In such cases, however, according to medical writers, though the injury received may not be apparent at the time, yet it will tend to develop at a future time a train of nervous diseases, which will last through life and extend to another generation.

So great are the evils which have already arisen, and which are likely to result from these protracted meetings, if long continued in this country, that I believe many of the most intelligent and worthy clergymen of the country wish for their discontinuance; and a vast majority of the most valued and influential men in the community exceedingly regret their introduction.

(x) Dr. Miller, of Princeton, (see his letter appended to Sprague on revivals,) alluding to camp meetings, which, as I have said, are very similar to protracted meetings, observes—"They have always struck me as adapted, in their ordinary form, to produce effects on our intellectual and moral nature analogous to those of *strong drink* on the animal economy; that is, to excite, to warm, and to appear to strengthen for a time; but only to pave the way for a morbid expenditure of "sensorial power," as we say concerning the animal economy, and for consequent debility and disease." These remarks are of course equally applicable to modern protracted meetings.

I have seen of late, in several newspapers, an account of a town meeting in Woodstock, Vermont, at which, after much discussion, the following preamble and resolution was passed by a large majority:—

*“Preamble and Resolution.*

“Whereas, a meeting has been held in the North Village in this town, professedly for religious purposes, and continued from day to day since the eleventh day of February last, under the direction and guidance of Mr. J. Burchard, to which great numbers of the citizens of this and other towns have daily resorted, and whereas said meetings have been protracted to unseasonable hours at night, tending to injure the health, of individuals and the good order of society—and whereas unwonted exertions, practices and arts have been used and are still using by the said Burchard and his abettors to induce “every man, woman and child,” who can by any means be operated upon by such practice and art, to attend and join said meeting, and whereas one individual at least, if not more, has become a maniac since the commencement of said meeting, in consequence of the feelings induced and begotten in course of attendance upon instructions inculcated in said meeting, and whereas the said J. Burchard does in said meeting daily and in almost every speech or discourse he makes, in coarse, unmeasured and blasphemously profane terms and phrases, denounce eternal vengeance of heaven upon large classes of our citizens who entertain religious views of a different character in some respects from himself—and whereas bigotry and profanity are evils greatly to be deprecated in every society putting forth claims to philanthropy and morality—

*Therefore Resolved*, That we highly deprecate this state of things—that we recommend to our citizens generally to abstain from further attendance on the said meeting of said Burchard, that he may have no fuel left upon which to practice his insidious arts, and no further countenance and encouragement from a candid and intelligent community; and that we seriously recommend to the authority of the town of Woodstock to take some measure to remove the aforesaid nuisance.”

(A true copy.)

ATTEST, NAHUM HASKELL,

1835.

*Town Clerk.*”

But if protracted meetings tend to injure the health of adults and dispose them to insanity, how much more injurious must they prove to children. I have seen of late, recommendations of protracted meetings, expressly for children, in the State of New-York; and judging from the progress of religious excitement in that portion of our country for a few years past, there is reason to fear that they will for a while become general, even until their bad effects are plainly and painfully visible. The following is an account of one at Bellville, Jefferson county, New-York. It is taken from the New-York Evangelist of August 16th, 1834.

“*Maternal Protracted Meetings.*

“BELLVILLE, Jeff. Co. Aug. 2d, 1834.

“The Maternal Association of Bellville resolved, July 21, that some special effort must be made for the salvation of children in Bellville and vicinity. A protracted meeting of *mothers and children* was proposed and appointed. Mrs. J. Burchard was requested to conduct it. The first day was observed as a day of fasting and pray-

er, by the mothers. Rev. C. B. Pond opened the morning exercises with fervent prayer for the blessing of God. Rev. J. Burchard, agreeably to request, delivered a discourse upon the Abrahamic covenant. The duties and responsibilities of Christian parents, rose before the mind, in overwhelming importanee through the light of God's word, and mothers felt to exclaim, "Visit not our iniquities and unbelief on our offspring, but for Christ's sake pardon our sins, and receive our children now at our hands." The remaining part of the day was spent by the mothers in the temple of God, before that sacred altar, where many of their little ones had been given to him in baptism, in penitent, believing prayer. The prevailing desire was, "Lord search us, sit upon our hearts like a refiner's fire, purify us as silver is purified, and prepare us to present ourselves and our children to thee acceptably." The Holy Spirit came into our midst like a *rushing wind*, entered each heart, and wrought the broken and contrite sacrifice. We felt to bring our all, and lay at the feet of our Saviour, and say—"Thy kingdom come, thy will be done" with us and ours. Never while memory holds its seat, will the members of this Association forget the twenty-third of July, 1834. Let its savor go with us and our children. The blessed privilege of coming to a covenant God—to Him who says, "I will be a God to thee and thy seed after thee"—to Him who has declared his covenant, Isaiah, lix. 21—"As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord; my Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and forever." What more can he say to the be-

lieving mother? We said, It is enough, we take it as ours, our children's, our children's children's, *our portion* "forever." We wept over our cruel unbelief, we renounced it; we took hold of that precious covenant anew; we took hold of that part relating to our children, with the same faith as that relating to ourselves. We remembered, too, that God hates the hypocrite. We presented our children in *faith* to the blessed Spirit to be prepared by *Him* to worship in spirit and in truth. We felt in our souls the truth, "Behold I stand at the door and knock, if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him and he with me."

"The next morning at ten o'clock, we assembled in the same sacred place, bringing our little ones with us, and with tears of penitence raised them in the arms of faith to a risen Saviour. We felt his presence, and remembered his word, "Blessed are they that have not seen me and yet believe." Some appropriate passages of Scripture were then read, and explained to the children, by Mrs. Burchard, during which the ladies lifted up their hearts in silent, believing prayer, that the Holy Spirit would now, while the children were hearing, make his word "quick and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword," even according to his promise. The total depravity of the heart, the justice of a future punishment, the necessity of regeneration, the way of salvation through Jesus Christ, the duty of immediate obedience to the commands, "Give me thine heart"—"Repent"—"Remember *now* thy Creator in the days of thy youth," were simply taught them. The Holy Spirit evidently moved upon these little ones and worked in them to will and to do of his good pleasure.

“The ladies then conversed with them separately ; such as they found convinced of sin, and ready to repent, were placed on a seat by themselves. When all were seated, these were addressed particularly. Their lost condition as sinners, their duty to repent of sin, and give themselves and all they love to Christ, to be his forever, were explained and illustrated, in a manner familiar to children. Christ was then presented as the sacrifice for sin, and the righteousness of the believer, and they urged to receive him now as their God and Saviour. It was a moment of intense interest ; every little face bespoke the movings of a troubled soul, and every mother felt that God the Holy Ghost was urging his claim upon the heart of her offspring, and when we knelt to ask the regenerating power of the Spirit, it was with groanings that no language can utter. By *faith* we rolled them over upon the eternal purpose of Jehovah, and believed the word, “ Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise.”

“The meeting continued five days ; about thirty children, from four to fourteen years of age, were hopefully converted by the power of the Holy Spirit through the truth. The children previously hoping, were much blessed, and strengthened. The ladies feel that this effort has been a great blessing to them as mothers and teachers ; their views are enlarged ; their faith increased ; and they are resolved, in the strength of the Lord, to lead these little lambs *daily* to the good Shepherd and believe his word—‘He shall gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom.’

NANCY M. HOUGHTON,  
Directress of the M. A. Bellville.”

Those who read the foregoing account, and fail to see the danger to be apprehended from such meetings becoming common, will not be convinced there is any danger, by any arguments I can use; they must wait until they see it in the natural and obvious results of such meetings; in the multiplication of diseases of the nervous system, in the increase of epilepsy, convulsions, hydrocephalus and insanity, and in a generation of men and women, weak and enfeebled in body and mind.

In connexion with this subject, the following account is deserving of particular attention; and if the statements of numerous medical men of great experience and ability, respecting the dangerous effects of long continued anxiety and great excitement of mind in children, are not totally false, then it is a very affecting one.

*Fanny S. Harrison.*—This little girl was born in Roxbury, Conn. April 27th, 1820, and died Oct. 2d, 1831. The following notice of her hopeful conversion, sickness and death, has been prepared for the benefit of our youthful readers, with the hope that it may lead them to “think on the ways,” repent, and give their hearts to God.

“Fanny was a sober, thoughtful, kind and affectionate child, and always obedient to her parents. She joined the sabbath school very young, she loved it much, and was always found in her place and prepared to recite her lesson, when health and circumstances would permit. During the last months of her life, her sabbath school hymn book, next to the Bible, was her chosen and constant companion. Often, after reading it, she was seen to press it to her bosom with both her little hands.

“She was fond of reading religious books, and it is be-

lieved always performed the duty of secret prayer. But it is not known that she was ever anxious about her soul until August, 1831. She then attended a protracted meeting in an adjoining town, where she became sensible of her wickedness of sinning against God. At the close of the public exercises, on the first day that Fanny attended, those who were anxious were invited to retire to the conference room for special instruction and prayer. Many of all ages accepted the invitation, and she was among them, though a child and a stranger.

“Her father, who is a minister, had been requested to attend and address those who should assemble. As he passed out, he found his little daughter standing at the door of the church weeping, and said to her, “do you wish to go with the anxious?” She made no reply, but eagerly grasped his hand and led along the way, while her tears told the feelings of her heart. From day to day during the meeting she was found, by her anxious father, near the same stand, ready to go with him to that solemn place. The meeting closed, but she had not submitted her heart to God, and was in great distress.

“The next week, (August 23d) a similar meeting commenced in her native place, which she attended with deep and increasing interest. At the close of the third day, her countenance indicated a change in her feelings, which she cautiously expressed. After this she was cheerful and happy, so much so that her friends had fears that she was self-deceived, and would soon become gay and thoughtless. These fears were sometimes expressed to her, but it uniformly grieved her, often to tears, to find her love to the Saviour doubted. One evening in particular, as the family were preparing for a religious meeting, she appeared unusually cheerful, and received

a gentle caution from her mother. The big tear started in her eye, and she instantly retired to her closet to pour her sorrows into the ear of her heavenly Father.

“At this time she took great delight in religious meetings, and was usually the first of the family on her way to the sunrise prayer-meetings.

“A few weeks after her hopeful conversion, she attended meeting for the last time. The next day she was taken ill, but her friends were not alarmed about her until the next Sabbath, when her disease put on the appearance of fever of the most malignant kind. Strong hopes were still entertained of her recovery, and little was said to her concerning her feelings, until it was found that her reason was impaired. This was a moment of painful anxiety to her friends, who feared that the last opportunity of imparting counsel, and of obtaining further knowledge of her feelings, was past. From this they were in a measure relieved on Thursday morning, Sept. 29th. She had had a distressing night, and as her father sat watching her with intense anxiety, her countenance suddenly assumed its wonted serenity. Her eyes which had long been closed, now beamed with more than usual brightness, and her tongue that had faltered, now said distinctly, “Father, I am happy.” What makes you happy, he inquired. “Many things; I love the Lord Jesus Christ.” She then, in answer to his questions, gave a distinct account of her previous exercises and hopeful submission to Christ. She said that her distress of mind, in view of her lost, sinful condition, increased until the third day of the protracted meeting, when she went to the anxious room, borne down with a view of her guilt and danger. While there, she tried, and believes she did give up her heart to the Saviour; that he there

appeared precious to her soul, and her mind was filled with light and joy and peace unknown before. She concluded by saying with emphasis, 'I was happy then, and have been happy ever since.'

"She was soon exhausted, and her mind was again clouded until the next morning, when she enjoyed another lucid interval. As she was viewing her parents for the last time, with an expression that plainly told the strong affection of her heart for them, her father said, "Fanny, do you love the Lord Jesus Christ better than you love your parents?" She immediately answered, "I do."

"On sabbath evening, October 2d, after a day of painful and laborious breathing, without a struggle she quietly fell asleep in Jesus, and, as we trust, entered on an eternal sabbath of rest in *heaven*."—*S. S. Record*.

As I have said, this account is deserving of attention, and in my opinion should be a warning to parents not to adopt a similar course with their offspring. Here was a sober, thoughtful child, early taught what the parents considered to be religious duties, and instructed in Calvinistic doctrines. Evidently, anxiety of mind on religious subjects was encouraged in her case; (*y*) taken from home to an adjoining town, to a protracted meeting, then to another in her own town, she became anxious, wept, and was in great distress; then a change occurred in her feelings, and she became cheerful—was

(*y*) Dr. Sprague's instructions to parents on this subject, are, "If they see in their children the least anxiety, (in what is supposed to be a revival,) they are to endeavor by *every means* to cherish it, and put them on their guard against grieving away the Holy Spirit." (See Lecture 5th on revivals.) This I consider very reprehensible advice, not justified by Scripture nor reason, and very liable to lead parents to much mischievous conduct.

reprimanded for her cheerfulness—took great delight in religious meetings—went from home to sunrise prayer meetings, &c. Then came disease, delirium and death. If I should say that this child's death was caused or much accelerated by the course pursued with her, by her constantly attending religious meetings, and by her religious excitement, I should probably express an opinion in which most medical men would concur. Other cases of a similar kind I might quote; but let this suffice, and let it be instructive to parents and religious teachers.

In conclusion, I beg the intelligent clergy, and the influential men of this country, to look at the foregoing accounts, and to examine the subject carefully, and I have no doubt they will take the same view of it that I do; and I trust they will raise their voices against farther encouraging such proceedings. This the good of our common country demands of them.

### *Ringing of Bells.*

If a person from some country where the Christian religion is unknown, was to visit one of the large towns in New England on the sabbath, he would be likely to think that much of our religion consisted in noise, and that our sabbath was a *gala day*. In the city of Hartford, where the whole population does not exceed ten or eleven thousand persons, and these occupying a space less than a mile square, there are eight bells on different churches, which are ringing a considerable part of the time, or very often on the sabbath. I am induced to notice this subject, from personal knowledge of the fact, that the sick are very much injured by the noise of the

bells on the Lord's day. I have no doubt that in some instances it has proved fatal; and I have frequently heard the evil complained of by those in health, as one which much annoyed them.

In the country towns, where the population is scattered over a considerable circuit, a bell may be useful, and one or two in a city would not be objectionable; but a larger number serves no good purpose, and only tends to create confusion. Almost every family has a time-piece, and but very few pay attention to the ringing of the bell as a call to meeting.

No one will pretend that the ringing of bells on the sabbath is scriptural. In fact, the practice appears to me to be wholly contrary to the spirit of revealed religion. We should infer from scripture that the sabbath ought to be a day of stillness and quiet, and not one of noise, ringing of bells, &c. If, therefore, there is not absolute necessity for the noise of numerous bells on the sabbath, I know not how it can be justified; and, as it causes much suffering, especially among the sick, I hope it will be, in a considerable degree, abandoned.

The Mahometans use no bells, and yet their meetings are very frequent, at least, five times in the course of twenty-four hours. Public notice of their meetings is given by the muzzeims, or criers, from the galleries of the minarets, attached to the mosques.

As I have hinted, the general possession of time-pieces renders a public notice of stated meetings unnecessary, and when such notice is necessary, some more silent method of giving it might be adopted than by ringing half-a-dozen or more bells. The early settlers of this country had recourse to various methods of giving notice of the time of meeting. By the records of towns on

Connecticut river, I learn that this was done by blowing a horn, or by beating a drum, or by hoisting a flag as a signal, on some elevated place. This last method, appears to me, might answer all the useful purposes that bells now do.

But however ridiculous this noise on the sabbath may be, it has, to many, become *sacred*, and so strong is the feeling on the subject, that I do not expect, very soon, so good and great reform, as a total relinquishment of bells on the Lord's day. But I do hope and trust that soon a less number will be rung, and less frequently, and for a shorter time, in our cities, and thus much unnecessary labor on that day may be avoided, and the Christian sabbath be made a day of comparative stillness, and of quiet for the sick and well, instead of being, as it now is, a day of more noise than any other in the week.

## CHAPTER VI.

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OBSERVATIONS ON MODERN REVIVALS OF RELIGION;  
AND WHAT ARE CALLED THE "SPECIAL" EFFECTS  
OF THE HOLY SPIRIT; COMPARISON OF THESE EF-  
FECTS WITH THE PHENOMENA OF DISEASE, ANIMAL  
MAGNETISM, AND EXCITEMENTS OF THE NERVOUS  
SYSTEM, &c.

In commencing this chapter, I feel under great embarrassment; an embarrassment arising not merely from the gravity and importance of the subject, but also from the great mass of facts relating to revivals of religion, and which I am desirous so to select, arrange and present to the reader, that correct conclusions may be drawn, and the truth established. It will be impossible for me, (without far too greatly extending this work,) to refer but to a small part of these facts. All, therefore, that I shall aim to do, will be to briefly notice the history of revivals, from the time of Wesley and Edwards, until the present day, to compare them with religious excitements in ages past, and also to compare the phenomena they present with those of animal magnetism, and the effects resulting from the influence of the imagination upon the body. I believe I am not insensible of the importance of this subject at the present time, and I hope to treat it with the candor and solemnity due to it, and with a desire pre-

dominating over all others, that the truth may be elicited.

This subject is one eminently philosophical, (z) and in many respects deserves the profound attention of inquiring men. Innumerable clergymen, of unimpeachable veracity, and some of them of considerable learning, assert and publish to the world, that the Holy Spirit of God is specially imparted to mankind for their salvation; that its effects are first upon the consciences of men, convicting them of sin, making them serious and sorrowful, and frequently affecting them so as to cause them to weep and tremble, to cry out in agony, to be convulsed, and to feel differently from what they ever have before; then, secondly, this Holy Spirit operates "on a different department of man's nature," and converts him. This is done by the "Holy Spirit renovating man's moral nature." "The will has naturally a wrong direction, and in regeneration it is set right, and a change of disposition occurs." [See Sprague and others on revivals.]

These same authorities assure us that this special influence of the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential for man's salvation; that unless it is imparted, no human being can escape indescribable torments in hell forever. They

(z) I am not aware, however, that it has been so treated. I have carefully examined the works of Edwards, Sprague and Finney, all standard authorities, on this subject, and regret to say that they are illogical, inconclusive, and evidence but little research or reflection upon the subject: and I may add, also, that they are so contradictory of each other in important points, that the reader knows not what to believe. They abound with careless if not erroneous statements, some of which, if believed, would justify the most wild fanaticism the world has ever known. Proof of this will be found in the succeeding pages, and the reader is referred to the works themselves.

also assure us that this influence of the Holy Spirit is not constantly imparted to men, but only occasionally ; and then not to mankind scattered through various countries, but to the individuals of one country ; and not to all the inhabitants of a country, but only to the members of some one religious congregation ; and not to all of them, but only to a few. For instance, there are times when to all appearances, this influence of the Spirit is no where observed ; then it descends as a shower, (I use the phrases of the writers on this subject,) upon one of our large cities, or a town wherein are Episcopalians, Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, Universalists, Quakers, Jews, and other religious sects ; but it only descends upon one of these sects at a time, and then only upon a few individuals. (a)

When we consider the immense number of mankind on the globe, and the myriads of human beings who have lived, to whom this spirit has not thus been imparted, and notice to how few it is now given, even in countries where we hear most of it, we are lost in a maze of sorrow, wonder and doubt. A feeling of sorrow naturally arises at the thought of the unutterable misery of innumerable millions of beings, created in the image of God himself ;—of wonder, how it can be reconciled with the plans of infinite benevolence,—with the plans of that Omnipotent Being who created for his own good pleasure these suffering mortals ; and a feeling of doubt, if

(a) I am aware that revivals are spoken of almost universally as great and powerful works ; but if these accounts are examined carefully, the converts will be found to be but few—very few indeed, compared with the whole number of individuals in one town or congregation.

not of hope, will arise, whether the statements of these men may not be erroneous. (b)

I believe the foregoing is a correct statement of the views of those who advocate these revivals of religion, as I have selected it from their writings. I do not mean to say, however, that they state it is only by revivals, that men are to have this spirit imparted to them; though Dr. Sprague says—"Now it has come to pass in these days in which we live, that *far* the greater number of those who are turned from darkness to light, so far as we can judge, experience this change during revivals of religion. It is for revivals that the church is continually praying; and to them that she is looking for accessions both to her numbers and her strength." In these views, those who favor revivals generally concur. Still these

(b) There are about 700,000,000 of human beings on the earth; all of whom believe in invisible beings superior to men, and entitled to the worship of men. In fact, man may well be denominated a religious animal. His disposition to adore and to create a religious worship, is the most distinctive mark of his nature, even more so than reason.

Of these 700,000,000, about one half are Polytheists, who believe in several gods. Upwards of one hundred millions are Mahometans. The remainder, excepting four or five millions of Jews, are Christians, or so called because they inhabit countries where the Christian religion is acknowledged.

Of this number about one hundred and twenty millions are Roman Catholics; sixty or seventy millions belong to the Greek Church, while only from forty to fifty millions are Protestants, and these are divided into innumerable sects. To those who believe that the Protestant is the only pure and acceptable religion, this is really a sad picture. But it may be recollected that *truth* is of slow progress; that once all mankind were Polytheists, and that constantly, though slowly, they have sought and found knowledge, and have improved in their religious views and worship. Still, when we examine this subject a little further, and reflect how very large a portion of this number of Protestants are not considered genuine Christians by many; and how small the number of those who have been affected by what is called the *special* influence of the Holy Spirit, in the manner described, we must, if we believe that no other can be saved, be filled with indelible grief at the deplorable fate and prospects of the inhabitants of this world.

same authorities, while they express the most perfect and undoubting confidence that these revivals are owing to the special influences of the Holy Spirit, assure us that they are not always genuine.

The Rev. Archibald Alexander, D. D., Professor of Theology in the Theological Seminary, Princeton, N. J. in a letter appended to Sprague's Lectures on revivals, says—"A revival, or religious excitement, may exist and be very powerful, and affect many minds, when the producing cause is not the Spirit of God, and when the truth of God is not the means of the awakening;" and adds "that during the time of religious excitement, only a few may be under the saving operations of the Holy Spirit, while many are affected by sympathy or other causes;" but, says he—"no human wisdom is adequate to discern between those who are savingly wrought upon, and those who are only the subjects of the *common* operations of the Holy Spirit." (c)

In this uncertainty, others who favor revivals concur, and some, in view of the evils and difficulties attending them, appear almost to lament them. Dr. Alexander, in the letter referred to, says, "It has often occurred to me—and I have heard the same sentiment from some of the most judicious and pious men that I have known—that there must be a state of the church preferable to these temporary excitements, which are too often fol-

(c) What does Dr. Alexander mean by the *common* operations of the Holy Spirit?" Does the New Testament teach us that some feelings, &c. are caused by the common operations of the Spirit, but that these are not to be regarded, as it is only by the *uncommon* operations of the Spirit, that men are to be saved? See his letter appended to Sprague on revivals; it will serve to show how confused are the notions which he and his associates have respecting the operations of the Holy Spirit.

lowed by a deplorable state of declension, and disgraceful apathy and inactivity."

Mr. Finney, (*d*) in his first lecture on revivals, observes, "It is very desirable that the church should go on steadily in a course of obedience, without these excitements. Such excitements are liable to injure the health. Our nervous system is so strung that any powerful excitement, if long continued, injures our health, and unfits us for duty. If religion is ever to have a pervading influence in the world, it can't be so; this spasmodic religion must be done away. Then it will be uncalled for. Christians will not sleep the greater part of the time, and once in a while wake up, and rub their eyes, and bluster about, and vociferate, a little while, and then go to sleep again. Then there will be no need that ministers should wear themselves out, and kill themselves, by their efforts to roll back the flood of worldly influence that sets in upon the church. But as yet, the state of the Christian world is such that to expect to promote religion without excitements is unphilosophical and absurd."

(*d*) "Lectures on Revivals of Religion," 1835. Mr. Finney is very high authority on the subject of revivals. Under his ministry there have probably been more numerous and more extensive religious excitements than under that of any other man now living. Owing to ill health, he has lately relinquished the charge of the Chatham street church, in the city of New York, and accepted a professorship of theology, but he no doubt now sways more minds in this country upon the subject of religion than any other one man, or probably any one hundred men. His lectures have a very extensive circulation, and though they contain much that I greatly regret and disprove of, yet they show that he possesses a vigorous mind. They are far more able and consistent than those of Mr. Sprague on the same subject. In fact, if religion is mainly to be promoted by revivals, as Mr. Sprague and the "old measure men" assert, then the course pursued by the "new measure men," of creating and keeping up great excitements, is, as Mr. Finney observes, the only one not "unphilosophical and absurd."

In view of these difficulties, and the statements made by the most ardent friends of revivals, and on other accounts, it seems necessary for those who wish to ascertain the truth respecting modern revivals of religion, to divest themselves of all prejudices respecting them, and to examine anew the whole subject, with great care and faithfulness. But in order to understand it, it requires to be stripped of all set phrases, and all ambiguous words. I am here, however, obliged to remark, that the language used by the men who witness these revivals, and experience this special influence of the Holy Spirit which is said to cause them, in the narratives they publish to instruct mankind respecting them, is, of all modern writings, the most figurative and extravagant, and most confined to set phrases and to unmeaning, *cant* terms, or to those of doubtful or double import. Of the correctness of this remark, the reader will be convinced by reading the following accounts, which are not unfair specimens of numerous ones with which the religious newspapers and magazines of this country have abounded within a few years.

The Rev. B. Cook thus writes to the editor of the Lowell Evangelist, giving an account of a protracted meeting and revival in Rupert, Vt., which account is published and copied into other religious papers:

“ May 4th, 1833.

“ A protracted meeting commenced on Wednesday, the 27th of February, with the Baptist church in Rupert, Vt., and continued eight days. At the commencement of the meeting, clouds of darkness seemed to obscure the sun of righteousness, so that all the church were not blessed with his refreshing rays. Some of the

members felt that the set time to favor Zion had come, and the voice of Israel's God to them was, 'Arise and shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.' While these put forth the hand of faith to take hold on strength, others were down by the cold streams of Babylon, with their harps unstrung and hung upon the willows.

"The meeting had continued to the close of the week, and there were none among a number of precious youth who had taken the anxious seat from day to day who could say, 'Draw near all ye that fear the Lord, and I will declare unto you what he has done for my soul.' Under such circumstances, those whose whole souls were in the work, began to think there were some Jonahs asleep down in the ship, or a golden wedge in the camp; or at least some obstacles that hindered the chariot wheels of salvation from rumbling in the midst. Therefore, Sabbath afternoon was given up to the church and all such as loved our Lord Jesus Christ, that they might humble themselves in the dust before God, and the inquiry be made, 'Lord, is it I?' and thus remove every thing, if possible, that barred the Holy Spirit from the place.

"As the protracted meeting exercise was about to commence, the pastor of the church requested all such as loved Jesus, and desired the descent of the Holy Spirit on the meeting, to come and kneel down with him in the broad aisle, and look up to Heaven for a blessing. The request was granted. At the close of the prayers which were offered, Christians weeping, began to confess; backsliders returned to their father's house, with love in their hearts towards the Lord God of Israel.' Thus the tithes and offerings were brought

into the store-house, and when the anxious were called for, the windows of heaven were opened, the Holy Spirit came down, and the cry was heard, 'What must we do to be saved?' Parents called for their children, and children called for their parents, to come and take the anxious seat. Sighs and groans were heard in every part of the house. The penitential tear now burst from the eyes of some as they came to the inquirer's seat, who had raised up a brazen front against omnipotence, by professing the soul-destroying doctrine of universal salvation.

"Thus the clouds of darkness were removed, and the stately goings of our God was manifested in the sanctuary; a cloud of mercy hovered over the place, and streams of salvation poured down, and a number were rejoicing in the merits of a precious Saviour when I left."

The Rev. Heman Humphrey, D. D. President of Amherst College, Mass., in a letter appended to Sprague's Lectures on Revivals, states that "God poured out his Spirit for the second time on Amherst College."—"For several weeks," he continues, "there was a manifest increase of concern for those 'who were ready to perish,' till there came to be mighty wrestlings with the Angel of the covenant, such as I believe always prevail. The 'noise and shaking among the dry bones' was sudden, and the work was rapid in its progress. The word of God was quick and powerful! In many cases, convictions of sin were extremely pungent. In some, they may be said to have been overwhelming. But in most instances they were short. When the student became convinced that the wrath of

God was justly abiding upon him, he shut himself up with his Bible, and his stricken heart, under the full persuasion that the crisis of his eternal destiny had come. 'Once he was alive without the law,' but now 'the commandment came, sin revived, and the young pharisee, as well as the publican, died.' In a few days, about thirty, and among them several who had been very far from the kingdom, and leaders in the broad way, were raised up, as we trust, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. It was a glorious change, a most delightful spectacle.—'These, where had they been?' We saw the rock from whence they were hewn, and the hole of the pit from which they were digged. It was the Lord's doing, and it was marvellous in our eyes."

Dr. H. had previously published an account of this revival in the Boston Recorder and Telegraph, May, 1827, in which he mentions that the year previous "a little cloud seemed for a few days to be hovering over the seminary, but it soon disappeared." The revival, however, commenced the following year, and he attributes it to the "blessing of God upon some *special efforts* to arouse professors from their slumbers." It was considered powerful, and "twenty students," he says, "are supposed to have *experienced relief*," in a single week. "But some of the students," he observes, "scarcely heard the thunder or desired to see the cross."

Such language, on so important a subject, is very greatly to be regretted. The reader of it cannot know what is meant by "clouds of mercy," (e)—"putting

(e) In describing a revival at Lee, Mass., the writer says, "The church and people of God in Lee beheld the cloud of mercy, as big as a man's hand, rising and spreading."—[See Connecticut Observer, March 5, 1827.]

forth the hand of faith to take hold on strength"—“chariot wheels of salvation rumbling in the midst”—“windows of heaven opening,” &c. He cannot know what actually occurred to twenty or thirty students, (for that was the number affected at Amherst College,) by being told that “there was sudden noise and shaking among the dry bones,” and “mighty wrestlings with the Angel of the covenant,” or what was the peculiar moral or physical condition of other students, which prevented them from “seeing the cross,” and “hearing the thunder.”

Far more objectionable language may be found in many of the accounts of revivals published in the religious periodicals of this country within a few years past. It is scarcely credible that writers have any clear ideas upon the subjects they thus treat. If they have, it appears to me that men have a right to expect, if not to demand, of intelligent men, who witness and experience what they attempt to describe, more precise and intelligible, and less figurative statements. It is presumed that those who make use of the extravagant language which we notice in their accounts, do not intend to have it understood literally; but from history and observation, we know there is danger that some will so understand it, and be led into gross errors.

On this subject, Bishop Lavington remarks, “We know not what effect it may have upon weak, credulous and superstitious minds; especially when improved by future comments, or the help of tradition. It is certain that divers rhetorical flourishes of this sort, and other little superstitions, have gradually swelled into the most false and absurd doctrines, as well as into rank idolatry; and the world is covered with a deluge

of monstrous legendary tales, which were derived from as small a fountain."

In the commencement of this inquiry, I wish to be distinctly understood as not questioning the special influence of the Holy Spirit, as mentioned in Scripture. With me there is no question respecting the special agency of the Spirit of God in Paul's conversion, or in the conversion of a multitude on the day of Pentecost, and at other times mentioned in the New Testament. These conversions were evidently miraculous, totally different from those we hear of in modern times, and accompanied by the "gift of tongues," "spirit of prophecy," &c. (*f*)

(*f*) I consider it my duty here to notice one of the very careless, and, I think, erroneous statements of Dr. Sprague, in his first and second Lectures on revivals of religion. In considering the objection to modern revivals of religion—that "they are *unscriptural*,"—he compares them to the effusions of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. "Here are facts," says he, "recorded by the unerring finger of inspiration, *precisely analogous* to those which the objection we are considering declares to be unscriptural." Similar comparisons have been made by others. But whoever will carefully examine the account in the Bible, of the conversions on the day of Pentecost, will with me be astonished that any person less fanatical or crazy than the Rev. Edward Irving and his associates, who claim to possess "the gift of tongues," &c. should venture to make such assertions. "I will by no means," says Bishop Lavington, "undertake to excuse from blasphemy, expressions which imply this similarity in the descent of the Holy Ghost." It is very surprising that Dr. Sprague should have published the statement I have referred to, and still more so that he should publish in the same work the following reproof of Dr. Green. "The whole dispensation of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost was extraordinary and miraculous; and to draw a parallel between the occurrences then, and those which now take place—a parallel extending to all the circumstances of the two cases—seems to me utterly unwarrantable, and exceedingly presumptuous." See Dr. Green's letter appended to Sprague on Revivals.

In a recent account of a revival in the State of New York, it is stated that "the Holy Spirit seemed to descend and fill all the place where we were sitting." That the Holy Spirit descends in modern revivals, "like a mighty rushing wind," &c. is very frequently asserted. Such statements are exceedingly reprehensible.

I shall consider modern revivals as taking their rise in the time of Wesley and Edwards; (*g*) though I agree with the Rev. Dr. Alexander, that "religious excitements have been common among Pagans, Mahometans, Heretics and Papists." (*h*) The Rev. Dr. Porter (*i*) says he believes "the era of modern revivals in this country is reckoned from the year 1792;" but on what authority he says this, I do not know. Surely the most extensive religious excitement ever known in this country was about half a century previous, in the time of Edwards and Whitfield, and lesser ones every few years after, especially in 1757 and 1770.

In order to have the reader clearly understand what is meant by modern revivals of religion, I shall transcribe a few accounts of them from different writers; and the importance of the subject, and a desire to avoid errors, must be my excuse for their length, and for using the language of the narrators themselves. I shall begin with one from Mr. Wesley's Journal (*j*) for 1759. It

(*g*) These men were born in the same year.

(*h*) Appendix to Sprague on Revivals.

(*i*) Appendix to Sprague on Revivals.

(*j*) Wesley was born in 1703, of parents remarkable for their devotional temper, who took peculiar care of his religious education, and encouraged his devotional feelings when very young. He early exhibited a tendency to fanaticism; would not have his hair cut, because the expense would lessen his means of relieving the needy. He fasted on all the appointed days of the ancient church, and by abstemiousness, reduced himself to a dangerous degree of weakness.

How similar the early lives of religious enthusiasts and fanatics! Compare the lives and journals of Wesley, George Fox, Ignatius Loyola, Whitfield, St. Teresa, and numerous others, who, in early life, were remarkable for strong devotional feelings, and who ultimately effected great good or evil, according as this early enthusiasm subsided into rational piety, or increased to extravagant fanaticism.

will be found in the second volume of his Works, published in ten volumes, at New York, in 1827. (*k*)

“About this time the work of God exceedingly increased under the Rev. Mr. Berridge, near Everton. I cannot give a clearer view of this, than by transcribing part of the journal of an eye witness.—

“Sunday, May 20, being with Mr. B——ll at Everton, I was much fatigued, and did not rise: but Mr. B. did, and observed several fainting and crying out, while Mr. Berridge was preaching: afterwards at church, I heard many cry out, especially children, whose agonies were amazing: one of the eldest, a girl of ten or twelve years old, was full in my view, in violent contortions of body, and weeping aloud, I think incessantly, during the whole service: and several much younger children were in Mr. B——ll’s view, agonising as they did. The church was equally crowded in the afternoon, the windows being filled within and without, and even the outside of the pulpit to the very top; so that Mr. B. seemed almost stifled with their breath; yet feeble and sickly as he is, he was continually strengthened, and his voice, for the most part, distinguishable, in the midst of all the outcries. I believe there were present three times more men than women, a great part of whom came from far; thirty of them having set out at two in the morning, from a place thirteen miles off. The text was, *Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.* When the power of religion began to be spoken of, the presence of God really filled the place: and while poor sinners felt the sentence of death in their

(*k*) Several editions of his works have been printed—two, at least, in this country. His life, by Southey, is one of the most interesting biographies, and one of the most valuable works, of modern times.

souls, what sounds of distress did I hear ! The greatest number of them who cried or fell, were men : but some women, and several children, felt the power of the same almighty Spirit, and seemed just sinking into hell. This occasioned a mixture of various sounds ; some shrieking, some roaring aloud. The most general was a loud breathing, like that of people half strangled and gasping for life : and indeed almost all the cries were like those of human creatures, dying in bitter anguish. Great numbers wept without any noise : others fell down as dead : some sinking in silence ; some with extreme noise and violent agitation. I stood on the pew-seat, as did a young man in the opposite pew, an able-bodied, fresh, healthy countryman : but in a moment, while he seemed to think of nothing less, down he dropped with a violence inconceivable. The adjoining pews seemed to shake with his fall : I heard afterwards the stamping of his feet ; ready to break the boards, as he lay in strong convulsions, at the bottom of the pew. Among several that were struck down in the next pew, was a girl, who was as violently seized as he. When he fell, Mr. B—ll and I felt our souls thrilled with a momentary dread : as when one man is killed by a cannon-ball, another often feels the wind of it.

“ Among the children who felt the arrows of the Almighty, I saw a sturdy boy, about eight years old, who roared above his fellows, and seemed in his agony to struggle with the strength of a grown man. His face was red as scarlet : and almost all on whom God laid his hand, turned either very red or almost black. When I returned, after a little walk, to Mr. Berridge’s house, I found it full of people. He was fatigued, but said he would, nevertheless, give them a word of exhor-

tation. I stayed in the next room, and saw the girl whom I had observed so peculiarly distressed in the church, lying on the floor as one dead, but without any ghastliness in her face. In a few minutes we were informed of a woman filled with peace and joy, who was crying out just before. She had come thirteen miles, and is the same person, who dreamed Mr. B. would come to her village, on that very day whereon he did come, though without either knowing the place or the way to it. She was convinced at that time. Just as we heard of her deliverance, the girl on the floor began to stir. She was then set in a chair; and after sighing awhile, suddenly rose up, rejoicing in God. Her face was covered with the most beautiful smile I ever saw. She frequently fell on her knees, but was generally running to and fro, speaking these and the like words, 'O what can Jesus do for lost sinners! He has forgiven all my sins! I am in heaven! I am in heaven! O how he loves *me*! And how I love him! Meantime, I saw a thin, pale girl, weeping with sorrow for herself, and joy for her companion. Quickly the smiles of Heaven came likewise on her, and her praises joined with those of the other. I also then laughed with extreme joy: so did Mr. B—ll, (who said it was more than he could well bear.) So did all who knew the Lord, and some of those who were waiting for salvation: till the cries of those who were struck with the arrows of conviction, were almost lost in the sounds of joy.

"Two or three well-dressed young women, who seemed careless before, now felt the power of God, and cried out with a loud and bitter cry. Mr. B. about this time retired, and the duke of M——, with Mr. A——ll,

came in. They seemed inclined to make a disturbance, but were restrained, and in a short time, quietly retired. We continued praising God with all our might: and his work went on as when Mr. B. was exhorting. I had for some time observed a young woman all in tears; but now her countenance changed. The unspeakable joy appeared in her face, which, quick as lightning, was filled with smiles, and became of a crimson colour. About the same time John Keeling of Potton, fell into an agony: but he grew calm in about a quarter of an hour, though without a clear sense of pardon.

“Immediately after, a stranger, well-dressed, who stood facing me, fell backward to the wall; then forward on his knees, wringing his hands, and roaring like a bull. His face, at first, turned quite red, then almost black. He rose and ran against the wall, till Mr. Keeling and another held him. He screamed out, ‘O what shall I do, what shall I do? O for one drop of the blood of Christ!’ As he spoke, God set his soul at liberty; he knew his sins were blotted out: and the rapture he was in seemed too great for human nature to bear. He had come forty miles to hear Mr. B., and was to leave him the next morning; which he did with a glad heart, telling all who came in his way, what God had done for his soul.

“I observed about the time that Mr. Coe (that was his name) began to rejoice, a girl, eleven or twelve years old, exceeding poorly dressed, who appeared to be as deeply wounded, and as desirous of salvation as any: but I lost sight of her, till I heard the joyful sound, of another born in Sion: and found, upon inquiry, it was she, the poor disconsolate, gypsy-looking child.

And now did I see such a sight, as I do not expect again on this side eternity. The faces of the three justified children, and I think of all the believers present, did really shine: and such a beauty, such a look of extreme happiness, and, at the same time, of divine love and simplicity, did I never see in human faces till now. The newly justified eagerly embraced one another, weeping on each other's necks for joy. Then they saluted all of their own sex, and besought men and women to help them in praising God.

“I have mentioned only one man, two women, and three children, at this time justified in the house, but have, perhaps, omitted some; and it is probable there were more than one justified at the church, though but one came to speak of it; for all are not equally free to glorify God in the midst of his people. I wish all who find the same salvation with Mr. Coe, were as ready to proclaim redeeming love!

“Thursday, 24, Mr. B—ll and I went to hear Mr. Hicks at Wrestlingworth, four miles from Everton. We discoursed with him first, and were glad to hear, he had wholly given himself up to the glorious work of God, and that the power of the Highest fell upon his hearers, as upon Mr. Berridge's. While he was preaching, fifteen or sixteen persons felt the arrows of the Lord, and dropped down. A few of these cried out with the utmost violence, and little intermission, for some hours; while the rest made no great noise, but continued struggling, as in the pangs of death. I observed, besides these, one little girl deeply convinced, and a boy, nine or ten years old: both of these, and several others, when carried into the parsonage-house, either lay as dead, or struggled with all their might:

but in a short time, their cries increased beyond measure, so that the loudest singing could scarcely be heard. Some at last called on me to pray, which I did; and for a time all were calm: but the storm soon began again. Mr. Hicks then prayed, and afterwards Mr. B—ll; but still, though some received consolation, others remained in deep sorrow of heart.

“Upon the whole I remark, that few ancient people experience any thing of this work of God; and scarcely any of the rich. These either show an utter contempt of, or an enmity to it. Indeed, so did Mr. Hicks himself, sometime since; having so deep an aversion to it, that he denied the sacrament to those of his parish who went to hear Mr. Berridge. Neither of these gentlemen has much eloquence, but seem rather weak in speech; the Lord hereby more clearly showing that this is his own work. It extends into Cambridgeshire, to within a mile of the University; and about as far into Huntingdonshire; but flourishes most of all in the eastern and northern parts of Bedfordshire.

“There were three farmers, in three several villages, who violently set themselves to oppose it; and, for a time, they kept many from going to hear; but all three died in about a month. One of them owned the hand of the Lord was upon him, and besought him, in the bitterness of his soul, to prolong his life, vowing to hear Mr. B. himself; but the Lord would not be entreated.

“The violent struggling of many in the above-mentioned churches, has broken several pews and benches. Yet it is common for people to remain unaffected there, and afterwards to drop down in their way home. Some have been found lying as dead on the road; others, in Mr. B.’s garden; not being able to

walk from the church to his house, though it is not two hundred yards.

“I have since received a letter from Mr. B., an extract of which I send you :

“ ‘On Sunday se’nnight, a man of Wybersley, a Nathaniel indeed, was so filled with the love of God during morning prayer, that he dropped down, and lay as one dead, for two hours. He had been so filled with love all the week before, that he was often, for a time, unable to work. On Sunday night last, as I was speaking in my house, there was a violent outcry. One soul was set at liberty. We sung nearly an hour, and the Lord released three more out of captivity.

“ ‘On Monday se’nnight, Mr. Hicks accompanied me to Meldred. On the way we called at a farmer’s house. After dinner I went into his yard, and, seeing nearly a hundred and fifty people, I called for a table, and preached, for the first time, in the open air. Two persons were seized with strong convictions, fell down, and cried out most bitterly. We then went to Meldred, where I preached in a field to about four thousand people. In the morning, at five, Mr. Hicks preached in the same field, to about a thousand: and now the presence of the Lord was wonderfully among us. There was abundance of weeping and strong crying; and, I trust, beside many that were slightly wounded, nearly thirty received true heart-felt conviction. At ten we returned, and called again at the farmer’s house. Seeing about a dozen people in the brew-house, I spoke a few words. Immediately the farmer’s daughter dropped down in strong convictions. Another also was miserably torn by Satan, but set at liberty, before I had done

prayer. At four I preached in my own house, and God gave the spirit of adoption to another mourner.' ' "

This "work of God," as Mr. Wesley called it, continued to increase; and the reader who wishes to pursue the subject, will find more full and curious details respecting it, in the same volume (*l*).

Anterior to this revival near Everton, though in the time of Wesley, there was a revival of religion in New England, particularly at Northampton, Mass., and which has been described, and was witnessed, by the celebrated Jonathan Edwards (*m*). Indeed, it was during his ministry there, that it occurred. According to Dr. E., this was not the first religious excitement at Northampton. He alludes to previous ones, during the ministry of his predecessor (*n*). He also makes another observation, and one which has an important bearing upon our subject. He says—"this town is a place where there has always been a great deal of talk of conversions and spiritual experiences." The way was therefore prepared for the people of Northampton, not only to have a *revival*, but one accompanied by "*extraordinary discoveries*,"—"faintings and outcries,"—"conflicts with Satan," visions, raptures, &c.

(*l*) Wesley's Journals are not, I believe, much read at present; but no one who wishes to understand modern revivals should neglect to study them.

(*m*) Dr. E. was born in 1703. In childhood, he says, he had a variety of concerns and exercises about his soul—was very devotional—and when a boy, used to pray five times in a day. He had two remarkable seasons of awakening, before he was brought to that new sense of things which he afterwards had. He observes—"My affections seemed to be lively, and easily moved, and I seemed to be in my element when engaged in religious duties." This was when he was a boy, and long before what he considers to be the period of his conversion.—[See an account of his conversion, written by himself.]

(*n*) See "A Narrative of many surprising Conversions in Northampton, and Thoughts on the Revival in New England," by Jonathan Edwards.

&c.;—for he says *outcries*, and transports of divine joy, &c. &c. were very common in the previous religious excitements of that region (o).

Whoever will read the life and conversion of President Edwards, will find that he exhibited a strong tendency to fanaticism in early life. His devotional feelings were very strong, and he no doubt most ardently desired to promote them in others. He was also a man of much energy and influence. Soon after his settlement at Northampton, owing to a sermon on the subject, the young people were induced to stay at home Sunday evenings, instead of spending them as formerly, in “mirth and company-keeping.” Soon after this, some “religious concern” was noticed, and “there happened a very sudden and awful death of a young man in the bloom of his youth; who being violently seized with a pleurisy, and taken immediately very delirious, died in about two days; which, (together with what was preached publicly on that occasion,) much affected many young people. This was followed by another death of a young married woman, who had been considerably exercised in mind, about the salvation of her soul, before she was ill, and was in great distress in the beginning of her illness, but seemed to have satisfying evidences of God’s

(o) To rightly understand this revival in 1733, the reader should refer back a century, and learn what were the then prevailing opinions in New England, respecting intercourse with the invisible world and with good and evil spirits. He will find, on careful inquiry, that a belief in witchcraft still prevailed to a great degree. Dr. Mather, not many years before, had published his *Magnalia*, a work, “Relating the wonders of the invisible world, in preternatural occurrences, containing many astonishing histories.” The miracles and tremblings of the persecuted Protestants in France had been heard of; and the convulsions and extraordinary doings around the tomb of the Abbe de Paris had just occurred, and had prepared people of strong religious feelings and but little reflection, for sudden descents of the Holy Spirit, “special influences,” interferences of Satan, &c.

saving mercy to her, before her death ; so that she died very full of comfort, in a most earnest and moving manner, warning and counselling others. This seemed much to contribute to the solemnizing of the spirits of many young persons ; and there began evidently to appear more of a religious concern on people's minds."

Dr. E. soon proposed to the young people to "spend the evenings after lectures in social religion," and "to meet in various parts of the town." "This was followed by the death of an elderly person, which was attended with many unusual circumstances, by which many were much moved and affected. About this time began the great noise that was in this part of the country, about Arminians," and which greatly agitated the people of that region. These things I refer to, to show *how* this "work of God" commenced. The reader will bear in mind the desire of Dr. E. for "a harvest," as his predecessor called a revival—and there can be no doubt that all these circumstances were improved by him, in such manner as powerfully to excite the minds of the people. Soon "the Spirit of God began extraordinarily to set in, and wonderfully to work amongst us ; and there were, very suddenly, one after another, five or six persons who were, to all appearance, savingly converted, and some of them wrought upon in a very remarkable manner. \* \* \* \* \*

Presently, a great and earnest concern about the great things of religion, and the eternal world, became universal in all parts of the town, and among persons of all degrees, and all ages, the noise amongst the dry bones waxed louder and louder. All other talk but about spiritual and eternal things was thrown by ; all the conversation in all companies, and upon all occa-

sions, was upon these things only, unless so much as was necessary for people carrying on their ordinary secular business. \* \* \* \* It then was a dreadful thing amongst us to lie out of Christ, in danger every day of dropping into hell; and what persons' minds were intent upon was to escape for their lives, and to *fly from the wrath to come.*"

After stating that this work spread into other towns and States, he proceeds—"Persons are first awakened with a sense of their miserable condition by nature, the danger they are in of perishing eternally, and that it is of great importance to them that they speedily escape, and get into a better state. \* \* \* \*

Some have had such a sense of the displeasure of God, and the great danger they were in of damnation, that they could not sleep at nights; and many have said that when they have laid down, the thoughts of sleeping in such a condition have been frightful to them, and they have scarcely been free from terror while they have been asleep, and they have awaked with fear, heaviness, and distress, still abiding on their spirits. It has been very common, that the deep and fixed concern that has been on persons' minds, has had a painful influence on their bodies, and given disturbance to animal nature. \* \*

Together with those fears and that exercise of mind which is rational, and which they have just ground for, they have often suffered many needless distresses of thought, in which Satan probably has a great hand, to entangle them, and block up their way; and sometimes the distemper of melancholy has been evidently mixed, of which, when it happens, the tempter seems to make great advantage, and puts an unhappy bar in the way of any good effect. One knows not how to deal with such persons; they turn every thing that is said to

them the wrong way, and most to their own disadvantage. And there is nothing that the devil seems to make so great a handle of, as a melancholy humor, unless it be the real corruption of the heart. \* \* \* It was very wonderful to see after what manner persons' affections were sometimes moved and wrought upon, when God did, as it were, suddenly open their eyes, and let into their minds, a sense of the greatness of his grace, and fulness of Christ, and his readiness to save, who before were broken with apprehensions of divine wrath, and sunk into an abyss under a sense of guilt, which they were ready to think was beyond the mercy of God. Their joyful surprise has caused their hearts as it were to leap, so that they have been ready to break forth into laughter, (*p*) tears often at the same time issuing like a flood, and intermingling a loud weeping. And sometimes they have not been able to forbear crying out with a loud voice, expressing their great admiration."

Though this revival he considered a "work of God;" yet he supposes man's agency may promote it, and says—"There is no one thing, that I know of, that God has made such a means of promoting his work amongst us, as the news of others' conversion; in the awakening sinners, and engaging them earnestly to seek the same blessing, and in the quickening of saints." Of this, we have no doubt. But is not this the way that all excite-

(*p*) Wesley's converts often broke forth into laughter, being seized, as he says, "with the spirit of laughter;" and this he attributed to the devil. But who does not know that this is a symptom of nervous disease? It occurs in hysterics, convulsions, frenzy and insanity, and to those who are said to be bewitched. The History of Witchcraft, says—"Mr. T.'s children after being convulsed, of a sudden commence laughing, which they cannot help." It was common among the "Tremblers des Cevennes," and French prophets.

ments and delusions are kept up? So long as people talk about ghosts, and apparitions, and witches, and relate occurrences to show the reality of them, so long will people continue to see them, and be affected by them. "To prevent witchcraft, said the celebrated d' Auguesseau, it is only necessary to cease talking of witches."

So it may be with religious feelings and unusual visions. When people are convinced that the Spirit of God has *specially* come to them, they will have the feelings and see the sights which others are said to have had or seen in that age or country, or which prevail among their sect. Sir Walter Scott, in his work on Demonology and Witchcraft after alluding to the proneness of the early settlers of New England to believe in supernatural occurrences—a proneness which still lingers though in a different form—says, "the children bewitched in New England, conducted themselves as those supposed to suffer under witchcraft were accustomed to do." So it may be, at a time when the Spirit of God is supposed to be specially present, that people whose religious feelings or fears are excited, will be affected, and will conduct as they have been told others did; and this tendency will be increased by talking about these feelings and these experiences.

But in order to give the reader a full and correct idea of this "work of God," I will quote one case of conversion which Dr. E. has related,—that of a young woman whose name was Abigail Hutchinson.

"She was first awakened in the winter season, on Monday, by something she heard her brother say of the necessity of being in good earnest in seeking regenerating grace, together with the news of the conversion of the young woman before mentioned, whose conversion

so generally affected most of the young people here. This news wrought much upon her, and stirred up a spirit of envy in her towards this young woman, whom she thought very unworthy of being distinguished from others by such a mercy, but withal it engaged her in a firm resolution to do her utmost to obtain the same blessing; and, considering with herself what course she should take, she thought that she had not a sufficient knowledge of the principles of religion to render her capable of conversion; whereupon she resolved thoroughly to search the scriptures, and accordingly immediately began at the beginning of the Bible, intending to read it through. She continued thus till Thursday, and then there was a sudden alteration, by a great increase of her concern, in an extraordinary sense of her own sinfulness, particularly the sinfulness of her nature, and wickedness of her heart, which came upon her (as she expressed it) as a flash of lightning, and struck her into an exceeding terror. Upon which she left off reading the Bible in course, as she had begun, and turned to the New Testament, to see if she could not find some relief there for her distressed soul.

“Her great terror, she said, was that she had sinned against God. Her distress grew more and more for three days, until (as she said) she saw nothing but blackness of darkness before her, and her very flesh trembled for fear of God’s wrath; she wondered and was astonished at herself that she had been so concerned for her body, and had applied so often to physicians to heal that, and had neglected her soul. Her sinfulness appeared with a very awful aspect to her, especially in three things, viz. her original sin, and her sin in murmuring at God’s providence, in the weakness and afflictions she had been

under, and in want of duty to parents, though others had looked upon her to excel in dutifulness. On Saturday she was so earnestly engaged in reading the Bible, and other books, that she continued in it, searching for something to relieve her, till her eyes were so dim that she could not know the letters. Whilst she was thus engaged in reading, prayer, and other religious exercises, she thought of those words of Christ, wherein he warns us not to be as the heathen, that think they shall be heard for their much speaking; which, she said, led her to see that she had trusted to her own prayers and religious performances, and now she was put to a nonplus, and knew not which way to turn herself, or where to seek relief.

“While her mind was in this posture, her heart, she said, seemed to fly to the minister for refuge, hoping that he could give her some relief. She came the same day, to her brother, with a countenance of a person in distress, expostulating with him, why he had not told her more of her sinfulness, and earnestly inquiring of him, what she should do. She seemed, that day, to feel in herself an enmity against the Bible, which greatly affrighted her. Her sense of her own exceeding sinfulness continued increasing from Thursday till Monday, and she gave this account of it, that it had been an opinion which, till now, she had entertained, that she was not guilty of Adam’s sin, nor any way concerned in it, because she was not active in it; but that now she saw she was guilty of that sin, and all over defiled by it, and that the sin which she brought into the world with her was alone sufficient to condemn her.

“On the Sabbath day she was so ill that her friends thought it not best that she should go to public worship, of which she seemed very desirous; but when she went

to bed on the Sabbath day night, she took up a resolution that she would, the next morning, go to the minister, hoping to find some relief there. As she awaked on Monday morning a little before day, she wondered within herself at the easiness and calmness she felt in her mind, which was of that kind which she never felt before ; as she thought of this, such words as these were in her mind ; the words of the Lord are pure words, health to the soul, and marrow to the bones ; and then these words came to her mind—the blood of Christ cleanses from all sin ; which were accompanied with a lively sense of the excellency of Christ, and his sufficiency to satisfy for the sins of the whole world. She then thought of that expression—it is a pleasant thing for the eyes to behold the sun, which words then seemed to her to be very applicable to Jesus Christ. By these things her mind was led into such contemplations and views of Christ, as filled her exceeding full of joy. She told her brother in the morning that she had seen [i. e. in realizing views of faith] Christ the last night, and that she had really thought that she had not knowledge enough to be converted ; but, said she, God can make it quite easy ! On Monday she felt all day a constant sweetness in her soul. She had a repetition of the same discoveries of Christ three mornings together, that she had on Monday morning, and much the same manner, at each time, waking a little before day, but brighter and brighter every time.

“ At the last time, on Wednesday morning, while in the enjoyment of a spiritual view of Christ’s glory and fullness, her soul was filled with distress for Christless persons, to consider what a miserable condition they were in ; and she felt in herself a strong inclination im-

mediately to go forth to warn sinners, and proposed it the next day to her brother to assist her in going from house to house.

“She had many extraordinary discoveries of the glory of God and Christ; sometimes in some particular attributes, and sometimes in many. She gave an account, that once, as those four words passed through her mind, WISDOM, JUSTICE, GOODNESS and TRUTH, her soul was filled with a sense of the glory of each of these divine attributes, but especially of the last. \* \* \* She once expressed herself to one of her sisters to this purpose, that she had continued whole days and whole nights, in a constant ravishing view of the glory of God and Christ, having enjoyed as much as her life could bear. Once as her brother was speaking of the dying love of Christ, she told him that she had such a sense of it, that the mere mentioning of it was ready to overcome her.

“Once, when she came to me, she told how that at such and such a time she thought she saw as much of God, and had as much joy and pleasure as was possible in this life, and that yet afterwards God discovered himself yet far more abundantly, and she saw the same things that she had seen before, yet more clearly, and in another and far more excellent and delightful manner, and was filled with a more exceeding sweetness. She likewise gave me such an account of the sense she once had from day to day of the glory of Christ, and of God, in his various attributes, that it seemed to me she dwelt for days together, in a kind of beatific vision of God, and seemed to have, as I thought, as immediate an intercourse with him, as a child with a father.”

The similarity between the feelings, visions, ravishing views, &c. of this lady, and those experienced by Wes-

ley's converts,—by St. Teresa, Lady Guion, and numerous other religious enthusiasts, is worthy of notice. Whitfield says—“God filled me with such unspeakable raptures, particularly once in St. John's church, that I was carried out beyond myself.” “I was so filled with the Spirit,” says Seward,—“that I was carried beyond myself, and had such things revealed to me, as I never had before.” Wesley tells us—“the Lord revealed himself to a girl of about seven years old, in an amazing manner; and for some hours she was so wrapt up in his Spirit, that we knew not where she was,—sinking to nothing in the discovery of his majesty and glory.”

Such were more common to popish saints, in times past. “Magdalen of Pazzi's life was almost one continued ecstasy. St. Gertrude, who consecrated her virginity to Christ, when only five years old, was illuminated by many revelations, and visions. St. Alcantara, at six years of age, was so contemplative, that frequently he was wholly absorbed in God, and carried into raptures.”

Edwards's convert had great longings to die, and so had St. Teresa, and numerous other semi-crazy papists and enthusiasts.

“Finally,” says Dr. E., “it began to be very sensible that the Spirit of God was gradually withdrawing from us, and after this time Satan seemed to be more let loose, and raged in a dreadful manner. The first instance wherein it appeared, was a person's putting an end to his own life by cutting his throat.” This man was of a melancholy temperament, became “exceedingly concerned about the state of his soul, grew discouraged, and the devil took the advantage, and drove him to despairing thoughts.” This suicide seemed

likely to become contagious. "After this," says Dr. E., "multitudes in this and other towns seemed to have it strongly suggested to them, and pressed upon them, to do as this person had done. And many that seemed to be under no melancholy, some pious persons, that had no special darkness, or doubts about the goodness of their state, nor were under any special trouble or concern of mind about any thing spiritual or temporal, yet had it urged upon them, as if somebody had spoken to them, '*Cut your throat, now is a good opportunity. Now! Now!*'"

Others were "led away with strange enthusiastic delusions," claiming to be divinely instructed, &c. After this, he says, "there were some turns, wherein God's work seemed something to revive, and we were ready to hope that all was going to be renewed again; yet, in the main, there was a gradual decline of that general, engaged, lively spirit in religion, which had been before. Several things have happened since, that have diverted people's minds, and turned their conversation more to other affairs; as, particularly, his Excellency the Governor's coming up, and the Committee of the General Court, on the treaty with the Indians; and afterwards, the Springfield controversy; and since that, our people in this town have been engaged in the building of a new meeting-house; and some other occurrences might be mentioned, that have seemed to have this effect."

This account, by Dr. E., should be well studied,—I think it of great importance to a right understanding of the subject of revivals in this country,—as, in my opinion, it has been a source of much of the fanaticism and disorderly conduct which has since been witnessed

in the United States, during times of religious excitement. Dr. Edwards was considered a man of much ability, especially as a reasoner. His other writings gave him great celebrity, and he therefore became high and almost undoubted authority on most subjects. His account, therefore, of the "surprising conversions at Northampton, and thoughts on the revival in New England," has been credited, quoted, and perused, by all of the same religious views, and is considered standard authority on the subject.

It is curious to notice that his account is quoted and credited by those who very greatly disagree respecting the method of conducting and promoting revivals. Both appeal to him as authority not to be questioned. Those who dislike "new measures"—who wish to "walk in the old paths"—who condemn "excitement of the passions," and "bodily agitation,"—who advocate calmness and order during a revival,—quote him, to justify their views; while those who appear to think that extreme agony, and distress, and outcries, and bodily agitation, are great evidences of the presence of the Spirit of God, refer to him also. And well they may, for he thus approves of their views.

"Extraordinary views of divine things, and religious affections, being frequently attended with very great effects on the body, nature often sinking under the weight of divine discoveries, the strength of the body taken away, so as to deprive of all ability to stand or speak; sometimes the hands clinched, and the flesh cold, but senses still remaining; animal nature often in a great emotion and agitation, and the soul very often, of late, so overcome with great admiration, and a kind of omnipotent joy, as to cause the person (wholly

unavoidably) to leap with all the might, with joy and mighty exultation of the soul ; the soul at the same time being so strongly drawn towards God and Christ in heaven, that it seemed to the person as though soul and body would, as it were of themselves, of necessity mount up, leave the earth and ascend thither. These effects on the body did not begin now in this wonderful season, that they should be owing to the influence of the example of the times, but about seven years ago ; and began in a much higher degree, and greater frequency, near three years ago, when there was no such enthusiastical season, as many account this, but it was a very dead time through the land. They arose from no distemper caught from Mr. Whitefield, or Mr. Tennent, because they began before either of them came into the country ; they began as I said near three years ago, in a great increase, upon an extraordinary self dedication, and renunciation of the world, and resignation of all to God, made in a great view of God's excellency, and high exercise of love to him, and rest and joy in him : since which time they have been very frequent ; and began in a yet higher degree, and greater frequency, about a year and a half ago, upon another new resignation of all to God, with a yet greater fervency and delight of soul ; since which time the body has been very often fainting, with the love of Christ ; and began in a much higher degree still, the last winter, upon another resignation and acceptance of God, as the only portion and happiness of the soul, wherein the whole world, with the dearest enjoyments in it, were renounced as dirt and dung, and all that is pleasant and glorious, and all that is terrible in this world, seemed perfectly to vanish into nothing, and nothing to be left but God, in whom the

soul was perfectly swallowed up, as in an infinite ocean of blessedness. Since which time there have often been great agitations of body, and an unavoidable leaping for joy; and the soul as it were dwelling almost without interruption, in a kind of paradise; and very often, in high transports, disposed to speak of those great and glorious things of God and Christ, and the eternal world, that are in view, to others that are present, in a most earnest manner, and with a loud voice, so that it is next to impossible to avoid it. These effects on the body not arising from any bodily distemper or weakness, because the greatest of all have been in a good state of health."

These things in his day were complained of as "*new*," but he justifies them, and refers to previous instances in which "the pangs of the new birth were such as to cause senselessness, paleness, and appearance of death."

Again—referring to cryings out, falling down, &c. he says,—“those who speak of such effects as probable tokens of God’s presence, and arguments of the success of preaching, it seems to me are not to be blamed; because I think they are so indeed. And therefore when I see them excited by preaching the important truths of God’s word, urged and enforced by proper arguments and motives, or are consequent on other means that are good, I do not scruple to speak of them, and to rejoice in them, and bless God for them as such; and that for this (as I think) good reason, viz. that from time to time, upon proper inquiry and examination, and observation of the consequence and fruits, I have found that these are all evidences that the persons in whom these effects appear, are under the influence of God’s spirit, in such cases.”

He also thus rebuked those who declaim against outcries, &c. "To rejoice that the work of God is carried on calmly, without much ado, is in effect to rejoice that it is carried on with less power, or that there is not so much of the influence of God's Spirit."

Dr. Edwards was assuredly in favor of "new measures," and those calculated to rouse and excite the imagination and the passions; and may well be quoted to justify any conduct we have ever heard of in any modern revivals. On this subject, the Rev. Mr. Walton correctly observes—"it is worthy of notice, that these men, whose names are now as "ointment poured forth," and "whose praise is in all the churches," did and sanctioned things in promoting the work of God, which, if done at the present day, would not only come under the sweeping denunciation of new measures, but be deemed more extravagant than any thing which, so far as I know, has occurred in New England for many years." (q)

Soon after this revival, Whitfield came to this country, and, as every one knows, had very great influence in causing revivals. "The attention of the people in general was greatly awakened, upon hearing the fame of him, that there was a remarkable preacher from England travelling through the country. The people flocked to hear him when he came to New Haven. Some travelled twenty miles out of the country to hear him." [See Memoirs of Dr. Samuel Hopkins.] He visited Northampton, "having read in England," says his biographer, Dr. Gillies, "an account of a remarkable work of conversion there, published by their pastor, the Rev. Jonathan Edwards; and having a great desire to see him, and to hear the account from his own mouth."

(q) "Preparation for Special Efforts to promote the work of God."—Hartford, 1833.

Accounts of these revivals in New England were transmitted to all parts of this and other countries, and seemed to produce others. The following very interesting account of a singular convulsive disease, though called a revival, at Cambuslang, in Scotland, in 1742, apparently excited by religious enthusiasm, appears to have been aided by Whitfield's proceedings in this country. I take the account from the Rev. Dr. Meik, and though of considerable length, it will well repay an attentive perusal.

“The kirk of Cambuslang being small, and in bad repair, the minister, when the weather was favorable, used to preach in a tent, erected close by a rivulet, at the foot of a bank or brae near the kirk, which is still called “the preaching or conversion brae.” No place could be better formed by the hand of nature for field preaching; as the brae rises gradually from the place where the tent stood, in the form of an amphiatre, so that every person in the audience could see and hear the preacher distinctly. Mr. M'Culloch, for about a year before this work began, had preached on the doctrine of regeneration; and upon the Sabbath evenings after sermon, frequently read to his hearers, missives, attestations, and journals, he had received from his correspondents, giving an account of conversions which had taken place in different parts of the world, especially in New England, under Mr. Whitefield's ministry. These missives, attestations, and journals, were at the same time published weekly at Glasgow, in halfpenny pamphlets; and had an extensive circulation in this and the neighbouring parishes. The fruits of these instructions were a more than ordinary concern about religion. Towards the end of January, 1742, two persons, Ingram More, a shoemaker, and Robert Bowman, a weaver,

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went through the parish, and got about ninety heads of families to subscribe a petition, which was presented to the minister, desiring that he would give them a *weekly* lecture. This petition the minister readily granted, and Thursday was fixed upon as the most convenient day of the week for that purpose. On the two first Thursdays, after the lecture was over, some persons came to the minister's house, much concerned about their spiritual interest ; but the number was not great. On Monday, 15th February, and the two following days, all the fellowship meetings in the parish convened in one body in the minister's house, and were employed for many hours in fervent prayer for the success of the gospel, and for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit in their bounds, as in other places abroad : The next day, being Thursday, 18th February, nothing remarkable happened during the lecture, except that the hearers were apparently all attention : but when the minister in his last prayer expressed himself thus : ' Lord, who hath believed our report ; and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed ? where are the fruits of my poor labors among this people ? ' several persons in the congregation cried out publicly, and about fifty men and women came to the minister's house, expressing strong convictions of sin, and alarming fears of punishment. After this period, so many people from the neighbourhood resorted to Cambuslang, that the minister thought himself obliged to provide them with daily sermons or exhortations, and actually did so for seven or eight months. The way in which the converts were affected, for it seems they were affected much in the same way, though in very different degrees, is thus described. They were seized all at once, commonly by something said in the sermons or prayers, with the most dreadful apprehensions concern-

ing the state of their souls, in so much that many of them could not abstain from crying out, in the most public and frightful manner, 'bemoaning their lost and undone condition by nature; calling themselves enemies to God, and despisers of precious Christ; declaring that they were unworthy to live on the face of the earth; that they saw the mouth of hell open to receive them, and that they heard the shrieks of the damned;' but the universal cry was, '*what shall we do to be saved?*' The agony under which they laboured, was expressed not only by words, but also by violent agitations of body; by clapping their hands and beating their breasts; by shaking and trembling, by faintings and convulsions; and sometimes by excessive bleeding at the nose. While they were in this distress, the minister often called out to them, not to stifle or smother their convictions, but to encourage them; and, after sermon was ended, he retired with them to the manse, and frequently spent the best part of the night with them in exhortations and prayers. Next day, before sermon began, they were brought out, and having napkins tied round their heads, were placed all together on seats before the tents, where they remained sobbing, weeping, and often crying aloud, till the service was over. Some of those who fell under conviction were never converted; but most of those who fell under it were converted in a few days, and sometimes in a few hours. In most cases their conversion was as sudden and unexpected as their conviction. They were raised all at once from the lowest depth of sorrow and distress, to the highest pitch of joy and happiness; crying out with triumph and exultation, 'that they had overcome the wicked one; that they had gotten hold of Christ, and would never let him go; that the black

cloud, which had hitherto concealed him from their view was now dispelled ; and that they saw him with a pen in his hand blotting out their sins.' Under these delightful impressions, some began to pray and exhort publicly ; and others desired the congregation to join with them in singing a particular psalm, which they said God had commanded them to sing. From the time of their conviction to their conversion, many had no appetite for food, or inclination to sleep, and all complained of their sufferings during that interval.\* This singular work soon became public, made a great noise, and brought vast numbers of people from all quarters. The minister who at first was assisted chiefly by preachers in the neighborhood, soon got abundance of assistance from his brethren ; some of whom came at his desire, and others of their own accord. Among those who resorted to Cambuslang on this occasion, there were many of the most popular ministers in Scotland ; such as Messrs. Willison, of Dundee, Webster, of Edinburgh, M'Knight, of Irvine, M'Laurin, of Glasgow, Currie, of Kinglassie, Bonner, of Torphichen, Robe, of Kilsyth, &c. Mr. Whitefield who had been in England for several months, did not arrive till June. The sacrament was given twice in the space of 5 weeks, viz. on the 11th July and 15th August. Immense multitudes of hearers and spectators were present, at both, but especially at the last. On the Sunday, beside the tent at the foot of the brae above described, where the sacrament was dispensed, other two tents were erected. At each of these there was a very great congregation. Mr. Whitefield, who

\* Some women who had born children declared, that, while they were under conviction, they endured *more bodily pain* than they had ever done in *child-bearing*.

was accustomed to numerous audiences, supposed, that, at the three tents, there were upwards of 30,000 people ; a greater number, probably, than was ever seen on any other sacramental occasion. Most of the above mentioned ministers and others, were assistants at this solemnity. Four preached on the fast-day, four on Saturday, probably fourteen or fifteen on Sunday, and five on Monday. There were 25 tables, about 120 at each, in all 3000 communicants. A great many of these came from Glasgow and the neighbourhood, about 200 from Edinburgh, about 200 from Kilmarnock, about 200 from Irvine and Stewarton, and some from England and Ireland. "But," says Mr. M'Culloch, "what was most remarkable was the spiritual glory of this solemnity ; I mean the gracious and sensible presence of God. Not a few were awakened to a sense of sin, and their lost and perishing condition without a Saviour ; others had their bands loosed, and were brought into the marvellous liberty of the sons of God. Some declared that they would not for a world have been absent from this solemnity. Others cried, now let thy servants depart in peace from this place, since our eyes have seen thy salvation here." The Cambuslang work continued for about six months, that is, from the 18th February till the second communion. Few or none were convicted or converted after this last period. The daily preachings and exhortations, except the weekly lecture, ceased. Public worship, however, was kept in the open fields till the month of November, when the inclemency of the weather rendered it necessary to repair to the kirk. The number of persons convicted and converted during this period, cannot be ascertained with accuracy. The former are said to have been by far the greatest number.

In a letter of Mr. M'Culloch's to Mr. Robe, dated 30th April 1751, after acknowledging and bewailing the many backsliders, he asserts, that he had then in his possession a list of about 400 awakened at Cambuslang in 1742, who from that time to the time of their death, or the date of his letter, had been enabled to behave in a good measure as become the gospel. About 70 of these 400 were or had been inhabitants of Cambuslang."

"To what cause this memorable work ought to be ascribed, was a question which occasioned much debate and great diversity of opinion. Some ascribed it to the influence of the Holy Spirit; others to the influence of the devil; and others to the influence of fear and hope, of sympathy and example, aided by peculiar circumstances. Those who entertained the two first opinions, agreed in thinking that this work ought to be ascribed to supernatural agency, but differed widely as to the agent to whom it ought to be attributed; the one considering the agent as the best of beings, and the other as the worst. Those who entertained the last opinion, thought this work might be accounted for by natural causes, and consequently that there was no occasion for having recourse to supernatural agency."

"That the work at Cambuslang ought to be ascribed neither to the influence of the Holy Spirit, nor to the influence of the devil, but to the influence of fear and hope, of sympathy and example, aided by peculiar circumstances, was the general opinion of those, who are known in the Church of Scotland, by the name of the Moderate party. The only extraordinary circumstance relating to this work, is the external effects on the bodies of men, by which it manifested itself; and these, they thought, might be sufficiently explained by the opera-

tion of natural causes. The soul and body, they observed, are so intimately connected, that they mutually sympathise with each other, and whatever gives pleasure or pain to the one, gives likewise pleasure or pain to the other. All the passions of the mind, especially those which are of a violent nature, discover themselves by some corresponding outward expression. When an event, whether joyful or sorrowful, is communicated in such an interesting manner as to effect our minds strongly, it will also effect our bodies in proportion. As this is the case with regard to such of men's concerns as are present and temporal, is it not reasonable that it should also be the case with regard to such of them as are future and eternal? If they be deeply affected by the preaching of the word; if, on the one hand, their fears be alarmed by the threatenings of the law, and the dread of everlasting punishment; or if, on the other hand, while in this wretched situation, their hopes be elevated by the assurance of pardon, and the prospect of eternal happiness; is it not natural that the feelings of their minds should discover themselves both by their words and actions? The sermons preached at Cambuslang, during this memorable work, it is alleged, were addressed, not to the understandings of the hearers, but to their imaginations and passions; and especially to the passions of fear and hope. 'Their lost and undone condition by nature was represented in a manner the most awful and alarming. They were brought to Mount Sinai, where thunder roars and lightnings flash. They were encouraged by the gracious promises of the gospel, by the consolations which are in Jesus, and the wonders of his grace. They were conducted to Mount Calvary, and exhorted to behold, with the eye of faith,

‘the healing virtues which flowed from the wounds of ‘their Saviour expiring upon the cross.’ The natural tendency and effects of these instructions were aided and strengthened by peculiar circumstances. The opinions of the Methodists, respecting the sensible operations of the Spirit of God in the work of regeneration ; the sudden and almost instantaneous conversions, which took place under Mr. Whitefield’s ministry, were well known at Cambuslang. Mr. M’Culloch was a great admirer of Mr. Whitefield, and employed him repeatedly to preach in his pulpit. He frequently discoursed on the wonderful conversions in New England ; and was at great pains to communicate to his people the papers which gave an account of them. In this task he was successfully assisted by More and Bowman.\* They themselves had been converted by Mr. Whitefield ; and were ever ready to describe the manner in which they had been affected, to those who were disposed to listen to them.” (r)

Revivals occurred after this every few years, especially in England. (s) In 1800, what is called the great

“\* The following fact, related by the one party, and not contradicted by the other, is thought to place the character of More and Bowman in a very suspicious light. When any person was affected in time of sermon, they were always at hand to give their assistance. One day when a woman who had fainted began to revive, Bowman says to her, “Christ is just a coming ; He is on the way ; He will not tarry :” and a little after More added, “Do you hear the sound of his chariot wheels ?” Upon which the woman got up, in a transport of joy, crying, “He is come ! I have got him, and will not let him go !” ’

(r) The reader will find in the second volume of the Edinburgh Medical and Surgical Journal an interesting account of some very remarkable “convulsive diseases,” that prevailed at various times in Scotland, and mostly among women, previous to the revival alluded to. It appeared like an Epidemical Hysteria.

(s) Wesley’s Journals.

Kentucky revival commenced, which has been alluded to and described by many writers. By some who are in favor of revivals, it is considered to have been a "glorious work of God," while others think very differently, and believe it to have been disastrous to vital piety, and injurious to the progress of true religious views and feelings in that region. But at the time, it seems to have been regarded by intelligent and worthy clergymen as an "extraordinary revival of religion," and "a glorious work of God." The following account of it I find in the Connecticut Evangelical Magazine, vol. II. It was written by the President of Washington Academy, who visited Kentucky for the purpose of examining into the truth of the subject, and is contained in a letter to the Rev. Archibald Alexander, President of Hampden Sidney College in Virginia, who says of the author—"I scarcely know a man on whose judgment in a matter of this kind, I could more confidently rely." The account states that people were accustomed to assemble on sacramental occasions to the number of eight to twelve thousand, and continue on the ground in devotional exercises for several days and nights. They were addressed by different ministers, and presently some of the audience began to fall down, which at first created some disorder; but shortly this falling became so general and frequent that it excited no disturbance.

This account states—"The number of persons who have fallen down under serious impressions in this revival, is another matter worthy of attention. And on this I shall be more particular, as it seems to be the principal cause, why this work should be more suspected of enthusiasm, than some other revivals. At Cane-Ridge sacrament it is generally supposed, that not less than one

thousand persons fell prostrate to the ground, and among them were many infidels. At one sacrament which I attended in that country, the number that fell was thought to be upwards of three hundred. Persons who fall are generally such as have manifested symptoms of the deepest impressions for some time previous to that event. It is common to see them shed tears plentifully for about an hour. Immediately before they become totally powerless, they are seized with a general tremor ; and sometimes, though not frequently, in the moment of falling they utter one or two piercing shrieks. Persons in this state are affected in many different degrees. Sometimes when unable to stand or sit, they have the use of their hands, and can converse with perfect composure. In other cases they are unable to speak, their pulse grows weak, and they draw a hard breath about once a minute. And in some instances their hands and feet become cold, and their pulse and breath, and all the symptoms of life forsake them for nearly an hour. Persons who have been in this situation have uniformly avowed, that they suffered no bodily pain, and that they had the entire command of their reason and reflection ; and when recovered they could relate every thing which was said or done, near them, or which could possibly fall within their observation. From this it appears that their falling is neither the common fainting nor the nervous affection. Indeed this strange phenomenon appears to have taken every turn it possibly could to baffle the conjectures of those who are not willing to consider it a supernatural work. Persons have sometimes fallen on their way home from public worship, and sometimes after their arrival. In some cases they have fallen when pursuing their common business on their

farms, or when they had retired for private devotion. I observed above, that persons generally are seriously affected for some time previous to falling. In many cases, however, it is otherwise. Numbers of careless persons have fallen as suddenly as if struck with a flash of lightning. Many professed infidels, and other vicious characters, have been arrested in this way ; and sometimes at the very moment, when they were uttering their blasphemies against the work.

“ At the beginning of the revival in Shelby county, the appearances, as related to me by eye witnesses, were very surprising indeed. The revival had previously spread with irresistible power through the adjacent counties ; and many of the religious people had attended different sacraments, and were greatly benefitted. They were much engaged, and felt unusual freedom in their addresses at the Throne of Grace ; for the outpouring of the divine Spirit, at the approaching sacrament in Shelby. The sacrament came on in September. The people as usual, met on Friday, but they were all languid, and the exercises went on heavily. On Saturday and Sunday morning it was no better. At length the communion service commenced, and every thing was still lifeless. The minister of the place was speaking at one of the tables without any unusual liberty. All at once there were several shrieks from different parts of the assembly. Persons fell instantly in every direction. The feelings of the pious were suddenly revived ; and the work went on with extraordinary power from that time to the conclusion of the solemnity.

“ These phenomena of falling are common to all ages and sexes, and to all sorts of characters ; and when they fall they are differently exercised. Some pious people

have fallen under a sense of ingratitude and hardness of heart ; and others under affecting manifestations of the love and goodness of God. Many careless persons have fallen under legal convictions, and obtained comfort before they arose. But perhaps the most numerous class of all, are those who fall under distressing views of their guilt, who arise with the same fearful apprehensions, and continue in that state for some days, perhaps weeks, before they obtain comfort. I have conversed with many who fell under the influence of comfortable feelings, and the account which they gave of their exercises, while they lay entranced, was very surprising. I know not how to give you a better idea of them, than by saying, that they appeared in many cases to surpass the dying exercises of Doctor Finley. Their minds appeared wholly swallowed up in contemplating the perfections of Deity as illustrated in the plan of salvation. And while they lay in all appearance senseless, and almost destitute of life, their minds were more vigorous and active, and their memories more retentive and accurate, than they had ever been before. I have heard respectable characters assert, that their manifestations of gospel truth were so clear, as to require some caution when they began to speak, lest they should use language which might induce their hearers to suppose they had seen those things with their natural eyes. But at the same time, they had seen no image or sensible representation, nor indeed any thing, beside the old truths contained in the Bible. Among those whose minds were filled with the most delightful communications of divine love, I but seldom observed any thing ecstatic. Their expressions were just and rational : they conversed with calmness and composure ; and on first recovering the

use of speech, they appeared like persons just recovering from a violent sickness, which had left them on the borders of the grave.

“I have sometimes been present when persons who fell under the influence of convictions, obtained relief before they rose. On these occasions it was impossible not to observe how strongly the change of their minds was depicted in their countenances. From a face of horror and despair, they assumed one which was open, luminous and serene, and expressive of all the comfortable feelings of religion. As to those who fall down under legal convictions, and continue in that state, they are not different from those who receive convictions in other revivals; excepting, that their distress is more severe. Indeed, extraordinary power is the leading characteristic of this revival. Both saints and sinners have more striking discoveries of the realities of another world, than I have ever known on any other occasion.

“I trust I have said enough on this subject, to enable you to judge how far the charge of enthusiasm is applicable to it. Lord Littleton, in his letter on the conversion of St. Paul, observes, (and I think very justly) that “enthusiasm is a vain, self-righteous spirit, swelled with self sufficiency, and disposed to glory in its religious attainments.” If this definition be a good one, there is, perhaps, as little enthusiasm in Kentucky as in any other revival. Never in my life have I seen more genuine marks of that humility, which disclaims the merit of its own duties, and looks to the Lord Jesus Christ as the only way of acceptance with God. I was indeed highly pleased to find that Christ was all and in all in their religion, as well as in the religion of the gospel. Christians in their highest attainments were most sensible of

their entire dependence on divine grace ; and it was truly affecting to hear with what agonizing anxiety awakened sinners inquired for Christ, as the only physician who could give them any help. Those who call these things enthusiasm, ought to tell us what they understand by the Spirit of Christianity. In fact, sir, this revival operates as our Saviour promised the Holy Spirit should when sent into the world. It convinces of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment ; a strong confirmation to my mind, both that the promise is divine, and that this is a remarkable fulfilment of it.

“ It would be of little avail to object to all this, that perhaps the professions of many of the people were counterfeited. Such an objection would rather establish what it meant to destroy. For where there is no reality there can be no counterfeit ; and besides, when the general tenor of a work is such, as to dispose the more insincere professors to counterfeit what is right, the work itself must be genuine. But as an eye-witness in the case, I may be permitted to declare, that the professions of those under religious convictions, were generally marked with such a degree of engagedness and feeling, as wilful hypocrisy could hardly assume. The language of the heart when deeply impressed is easily distinguished from the language of affectation.

“ Upon the whole, sir, I think the revival in Kentucky among the most extraordinary that have ever visited the church of Christ. And all things considered it was peculiarly adapted to the circumstances of the country into which it came. Infidelity was triumphant, and religion at the point of expiring. Something of an extraordinary nature appeared necessary to arrest the attention of a giddy people, who were ready to conclude

that Christianity was a fable and futurity a dream. This revival has done it. It has confounded infidelity, awed vice into silence, and brought numbers beyond calculation under serious impressions.

“ Whilst the blessed Saviour was calling home his people and building up his church in this remarkable way, opposition could not be silent. At this I have hinted above. But it is proper I should observe here, that the clamorous opposition which assailed the work at its first appearance has been in a great measure borne down before it. A large proportion of those who have fallen, were at first opposers; and their example has taught others to be cautious, if it has not taught them to be wise.

“ I have written on this subject to a greater length than I first intended. But if this account should give you any satisfaction, and be of any benefit to the common cause, I shall be fully gratified.

Yours with the highest esteem.

GEO. A. BAXTER.

*Rev. Archibald Alexander.”*

The foregoing accounts to many, I fear, will seem tedious; but I have considered it necessary to quote them to enable the reader to learn what is meant by a revival of religion. Let no one suppose that those I have quoted are the peculiarly extravagant and objectionable ones, for surely they are less so than many I have read in the religious newspapers and religious publications of the last few years. So extravagant and objectionable have been some of the late revivals and protracted meetings, that even the more intelligent revivalists have become alarmed. The Albany Telegraph and Journal, a

Calvinistic paper, of May 1834, says—" a faithful report of a protracted meeting, would reveal one of the most horrible scenes of religious phrenzy ever known in this country." The same paper tells of " boisterous and blasphemous expressions which have been heard from the pulpit," and laments the " extensive toleration of fanatical ministers," and " the errors and extravagance which threaten to desolate a portion of the church." All this is said, not of the conduct of those of a different religious sect, but of the Calvinistic, Presbyterian, or Evangelical clergy of the present day.(a)

That some men, who believe that revivals are owing to a " special outpouring of the spirit of God," and that this spirit causes solemn and anxious feelings ; and yet are opposed to some measures proposed and adopted by Wesley, Edwards, Finney and others, and state that they do not consider outcries, trembling, falling, &c. to be caused by, or as signs of the presence of the spirit of God, I admit. But that they can maintain this ground consistently, I do not admit.

All admit that this *special influence* is manifested in a great diversity of ways—that " there is an incalculable variety, respecting the measure of conviction, suddenness of operation, clearness of discovery, and the immediate effects produced on the countenance and body." How then can any one who believes that the Spirit of God is specially present, causing solemnity and anxious feelings, say that this Spirit does not as certainly cause the outcries, tremblings, convulsions, fallings, &c. ?

(a) See the Journal quoted,—also the N. Y. Evangelist,—the Boston Recorder, particularly an account of " *Seven protracted meetings*" in Berkshire County, Mass.—and other religious newspapers, pamphlets, &c. &c. relating to late revivals of religion.

There is at present in this country, a controversy among revivalists, respecting the proper measures to be adopted at the time the Holy Spirit is specially present. But it appears to me this controversy is very puerile, and confined to unimportant particulars, such as whether protracted meetings should be continued four days or longer,—whether “anxious seats” are proper,—whether “audible groans and smiting of hands” are to be “indulged in,”—whether “women are to keep silence in meetings” or not,—whether “sinners should be prayed for by name,” &c. &c. (*b*)

Both parties agree in what I deem the most important particular, which is, that the Spirit of God is specially present at revivals,—that it causes them, and continues them,—and that it is imparted to some individuals and not to others. They also agree respecting the sorrow and agony of the first stages of religious excitement, and the joy and happiness of the second. But if the Spirit of God causes this agony and joy, which both admit,

(*b*) See Dr. Sprague’s “Lectures on Revivals,” and the letters appended to them, in which these matters are discussed with much gravity by twenty or more doctors of divinity, all of whom, I believe, belong to the “old measure” school. It is to be regretted that Dr. Sprague did not obtain letters and information upon the subject of revivals from Methodist clergymen, and from the “new measure” clergymen of his own religious faith, and who have had far more experience in what are called revivals of religion, than most of those from whom he received the letters he has published. It is also to be lamented that Dr. S. himself has so carefully pursued a *non-committal* policy, that on many points no one can find his own views exactly. For instance, of a protracted meeting, he says—“in itself considered, I confess that, in certain circumstances, and with certain limitations, it seems to me unobjectionable.” Numerous instances of this kind abound in the work.

It is also to be regretted that these clergymen did not state the particulars of their own conversion, by the special influence of the Holy Spirit. On so important a subject, and one so mysterious, nothing calculated to elucidate it should be omitted.

who can say that greater agony, more violent bodily suffering, or that greater joy, amounting to ecstasy, may not be caused by the same outpouring of this special influence? Who can point out the dividing line in the conduct of those who compose a religious meeting, and who claim to be actuated by the special influence of God, and say which conduct is caused by the Holy Spirit, and which is not?

Both also agree that the special influence of the spirit causes some bodily affection. The writers alluded to of the "old measure school," speak of "sinners turning pale and trembling,"—of "audible sobbing and sighing," of "unusual trembling and weeping,"—during revivals, and the idea that these effects and the unusual solemnities and feelings witnessed at revivals, are caused by the special presence of the Holy Spirit, runs through most of their accounts of them. Dr. Sprague himself, though exceedingly cautious, tells us in his fourth Lecture, of "deep and awful solemnity pervading a congregation, that is *induced* by the *special presence* of the Spirit of God." Dr. Hyde, of Lee, a very high authority on this subject, and opposed to "new measures," tells us that "the solemn stillness and the *flowing tears* from many eyes, *evinced* the presence of the Holy Spirit."

Here let us pause, and ask;—If we are to believe these statements, must we not believe all that we have read in the preceding accounts of what were called the special operations of the Spirit of God? Must we not believe that the tremblings, convulsions, outcries, falling, &c. witnessed in Scotland and in Kentucky, were also "induced" by the Spirit of God, and that its presence was thereby "evinced"? And if we do believe this,

where are we to stop ? Must we not also believe in the accounts of French prophets ? If the special presence of the Spirit of God “ induces awful solemnity ” in Dr. Sprague’s congregation at Albany, and the “ flowing tear evinces its presence,” at Lee, as Dr. Hyde believes, who shall say that the convulsions, fallings, outcries, dreams, visions, gift of tongues, spirit of prophecy—all —*all* that the most wild fanatics, from the earliest ages, down to the time of Irving, Pierson and Matthias, who claim to have been actuated by the Holy Spirit, are not in fact owing to this cause ?

Here then I rest the argument ; and maintain that whatever serves to prove the above statements of Drs. S. and H., will serve to prove that some of the most fanatical conduct the world has ever known, was owing to the special influence of the Holy Spirit of God. I may be mistaken on this subject, not knowing what proof may be adduced to sustain the statements referred to, but I cannot think of any that will not be alike applicable to all. Neither do I see any thing in this conduct, or in the accounts of revivals, which may not be rationally accounted for, without attributing it to the special influence of the Holy Spirit. But to this I shall again recur, at the close of the chapter.

But do the scriptures teach us that revivals similar to those contended for by Dr. Sprague, and the “ old measure ” men, are genuine, and are to prevail, and that such are to be produced by the Holy Spirit, while those which prevailed in Kentucky and in Scotland, and such as are now advocated by the “ new measure ” men, are spurious and not caused by the Holy Spirit ?

I think that neither can be justified by the New Testament ; and assuredly nothing is said or hinted there,

of a time when revivals, such as the "old measure" men say are genuine, are to become prevalent. I am aware, however, that those who are denounced as very fanatical or crazy,—who claim that to them is imparted the gift of tongues, or the spirit of prophecy, or who claim to be guided by visions and dreams,—might say in justification, that on the day of Pentecost, when the special influence of the Holy Spirit was imparted, it caused bodily affections; and that such events were foretold by Joel, as to happen in later times, which prophecy is referred to by Peter, Acts ii. 17.—"And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophecy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men dream dreams."—Justin Martyr, one of the earliest christian writers after the Apostles, calls it the "spirit of prophecy."

There is, however, nothing in modern revivals, that has not often happened before, and, as I have said, may be accounted for without supposing a special influence from on high.

The reader must have noticed that the influence of a powerful or singularly endowed preacher, often appears to cause a revival, or to powerfully affect and as it were to fascinate an audience. It is a curious fact in the history of human nature, and is well discussed by Dugald Stewart, in his "Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind," that sometimes an immense assembly while listening to an eloquent man, become passive instruments in his hands. This kind of eloquence, or this power, had Whitfield and Wesley, and in later times, Finney, Foote and Burchard. (c)

(c) Even while I am now writing, I see by the Vermont Chronicle, that Mr. B. has been preaching at Montpelier, Vt. and caused a powerful revival.

I will not pause to inquire why it is so,—but state the fact as we witness it, that some men have the power to attract great crowds and to sway them. The works of Wesley and Whitfield abound with accounts of the exertion of this power, and of multitudes following them and becoming convicted almost immediately on hearing them preach.

Mr. Whitfield says—“Thousands and ten thousands follow us : the fire is kindled ; and I know that all the devils in hell shall not be able to quench it. Well may the devil and his servants rage horribly : their kingdom is in danger. I could think of nothing so much, as Joshua going from city to city, subduing the devoted nations. With what efficacy and success I have been enabled to preach, tongue cannot express.”

Mr. Wesley boasts of “converting the drunkard, the whoremonger, the oppressor, the swearer, the sluggard, the miser ; and elsewhere, several prostitutes. No work has been wrought so swiftly, so extensively, since Constantine the Great.”

But previous to this time, similar things occurred, and among Papists.

“St. Ignatius,” said Gregory XV., “was like Joshua, great, according to his name, for saving the elect of God ; (Ecclus. xlvi. 1.) he was so ardent, (for Ignatius signifies fiery,) that when he sent forth his missionaries to gain souls, he usually said, go, set on fire and inflame every thing.”

“St. Francis used to call people together with blowing a horn, when he was to preach ; and his preaching was so wonderfully moving, that prodigious multitudes of men and women, above all number and computation, and the very harlots were converted. Many in-

flamed with devotion, and desire of perfection, contemning all mundane vanities, followed his footsteps; and swiftly did this success increase to the ends of the earth."

"St. Anthony had such a power over men and women, that he converted all sorts of sinners, even usurers and common strumpets. A certain Jesuit went to the stews, and made a surprising conversion of multitudes of prostitutes."

"St. Francis of Sales brought over seventy-two thousand heretics to the Catholic faith. St. Dominic so strangely astonished and set on fire the minds of his auditors, his discourses were so forcible and ravishing;—that he converted almost an hundred thousand souls that were strayed and lost."

Mr. Finney has, as I have said, possessed this power, and he alludes to the effect of a revival upon the profligate. "Very often, (he says,) the most abandoned profligates are among the subjects. Harlots, and drunkards, and infidels, and all sorts of abandoned characters, are awakened and converted. The worst part of human society are softened, and reclaimed, and made to appear as lovely specimens of the beauty of holiness."

Mr. Foote also has been considered as one thus endowed. He observed, in Berkshire county, Mass.: "Most ministers, I suppose, do not expect to convert 100 souls in all their lives; but, though I am a poor creature, I should not think I did any thing unless I converted 2000 or 2500 a year." (v)

"Independently, however, of these considerations,

(v) See an account of the "Seven Protracted Meetings in Berkshire county, Mass.," by the Rev. Daniel D. Field, D. D. of Stockbridge, Mass. published in the Boston Recorder of April 3d, 1835.

(says Dugald Stewart,)—there is something in the sight of a great multitude, more favorable to the excitement of the imagination and of the passions, than to the cool exercise of our reasoning powers.” Add to this, that these large assemblies are all very much excited upon some important subject, and they become more easy to sway, and often their feelings and actions become contagious.

Such appears to have been the case with the *Trembleurs des Cevennes*, whose history it is important to consider.

#### *Trembleurs des Cevennes.*

This name has been given to a religious sect which sprung up in Cevennes, in the south of France, and who, holding opinions opposed to the Romish Church, for a long time were irritated and persecuted by that formidable power. They were, however, protected from very violent oppressions, by the edict of Nantes; but when Louis XIV. unwisely repealed this act in 1685, this sect, together with the protestants of France, were subjected to the most dreadful persecutions. Their children were removed from them to be educated in the Roman Catholic faith—a faith which they abhorred,—the men were sent to the galleys for visiting the house of prayer,—women were imprisoned, and preachers were hanged.

These persecutions inflamed the zeal of the unhappy Protestants, and produced a kind of convulsive disorder, that appeared to be contagious, or was transmitted from one to another. Those persons that were most strongly affected by their persecutions, or whose physical systems

the most readily took on diseased action from great mental emotion, were seized with tremblings and convulsions; and when in this state, *preached* and *prophesied*, and foretold the coming triumph of their holy cause. Multitudes came to see and hear the prophets; and catching the same bodily affection, by imitation, they also commenced prophesying and preaching.

This trembling and spirit of prophecy, or inspiration, as they believed it to be, seized them when, unknown to their persecutors, they assembled for religious worship. The one first seized by the Holy Spirit, as they considered it, was often prostrated, and began to tremble, and soon to preach and prophecy. When this one ceased, another would be taken, and often two or three, or more, were thus preaching at the same time. They were heard with the most profound attention by their associates, who believed they were actuated and inspired by the Holy Spirit. One thing considered very remarkable, was, that children were thus seized, and they also preached and prophesied; (*w*) and some who before had been considered mentally imbecile, when thus seized, expressed themselves with much ability. (*x*)

Very similar to the Trembleurs des Cevennes, were the *Convulsionnaires de St. Medard*.

(*w*) "I have seen at Aubessaque, three or four children, between the age of 3 and 6 years, seized of the spirit. When I was at Jacob Boussige's house, one of his children, 3 years of age, was seized with the Spirit, and fell to the ground. He was very much agitated, and struck himself violently on his breast, saying it was the sins of his mother that made him suffer."— [Deposition of Wm. Bruguier, in *Theatre sacre des Cevennes*.]

(*x*) See *Magnetisme Animal en France*, par Alexandre Bertrand,—p. 358.

*Convulsionnaires de Saint Medard.*

This epidemical affection was also the result of religious enthusiasm, carried to a high degree, by persecution. It occurred around the tomb of the Abbe de Paris (y) in 1727. He was revered as a Saint, after his death, by the appellants Jansenists from the Bull *Unigenitus*, in 1713. To his tomb, great numbers resorted to pray, and some invalids who there besought his intercession, thought they obtained cures. They published accounts of these miraculous cures, and the Jansenists availed themselves of the popular credulity in such things, to revive their sinking influence. The number of visitors to the tomb augmented, and soon some women, strongly excited by the persecutions they had undergone, and believing that God was now condemning their opposers, were seized with convulsions. These became contagious and were accompanied by miraculous cures. So numerous and perfect were the proofs of these cures around the tomb of the Abbe de Paris, that the Jesuits themselves, though very desirous, were not able to refute them in a satisfactory manner. (z) The government, however, favored the Jesuits, and beheld with displeasure the resort to this tomb, and the miracles performed there. The tomb was therefore ordered to be closed, and a guard was placed near it with orders to disperse the crowd. The Archbishop of Paris forbade the worship

(y) He was the son of a counsellor of Parliament, but embraced an ecclesiastical profession, and attached himself to the Jansenist party in the disputes occasioned by the *bull Unigenitus*. He renounced his claim to his patrimonial inheritance in favor of a brother, and devoted himself to a life of poverty, living in a small, poor house, where he passed his time in prayer, and in making stockings for the poor.

(z) "*La Verite des Miracles*," par Carre de Montegeron.

of the Abbe de Paris, and many of the Convulsionnaires were imprisoned. (a)

These fanatics of Cevennes had their successors, who have been known in England by the name of *French prophets*. They claimed to be inspired by the Holy Ghost, and were of all ages and sexes. They had a great variety of fits, and often fainted and remained in trances for a considerable time, during which they saw heaven and hell, angels and paradise. Those who first received the Holy Spirit, dropped down and cried out "*mercy*," not only in meetings but in the fields. When the bodies had been for a while agitated, they commenced prophesying, the burden of which was,—“Amend your lives!—repent ye, the end of all things draws nigh!”

“These prophets also pretended to the gift of languages, of discerning the secrets of the heart, the gift of ministration of the same spirit to others by the laying on of hands, and the gift of healing. To prove they were really inspired by the Holy Ghost, they alleged the complete joy and satisfaction they experienced, the spirit of prayer, which was poured forth upon them, and the answer of their prayer to God.”—[Buck’s Theo. Dictionary.]

Akin to the belief that the fanatical conduct just de-

(a) Voltaire said there was placed on the door of the tomb, this inscription;—

“De par le roi, defense a Dieu  
De faire miracle en ce lieu ”

And he adds,—“Ce qu’il y a de plus etonnant, c’est que Dieu obeit;”—a remark not exactly correct, for these miracles continued to occur, until the time of the French Revolution, when all minds became agitated by political events

scribed was produced by a supernatural cause, is the belief in the *presence and influence of the devil*, or

*Possession.*

In former times, this belief was quite general, and then every extraordinary disease was attributed to this cause; and for a cure, resort was had to *exorcism*. The details, found in books on this subject, are interesting and deserving of attention, though often connected with circumstances shocking and deplorable. (a) This belief, however, for a century or more, has been wearing away, (b) though some portions of community, especially the least intelligent, still partially adhere to it. That Wesley and his associates believed in it, is evident from various statements in his journals. He often mentions "surprising instances of the power of the devil,"—of "being torn by the evil one,"—and says—"giving up witchcraft is giving up the Bible." Seward, the companion of Whitfield, was greatly troubled and hindered in his religious duties by the devil.

"O the horrid suggestions that *Satan* has, day after day, followed me with! He has endeavored to cast a cloud over all the *manifestations* I have had of the Divine Favor; and though the Lord has a thousand times over told me that he had *loved me with an everlasting love, and that with his loving kindness he had drawn me, and that he would never leave me nor forsake me*, yet *Satan* had the impudence, in the midst of my prayers this day, to suggest to me, that I was not one of God's *elect*, and therefore my prayers were an

(a) Bertrand on Animal Magnetism, and Works on Witchcraft.

(b) Bishop Hall, in his life, tells of arguing with a Jesuit, and the Jesuit said the English church worked no miracles. Hall answered—"In our Church, we have manifest proof of the ejection of devils, by fasting and prayer." Hall died in 1656.

abomination. He is generally so busy with me in prayer, that my time is chiefly spent in keeping him off; so that I am often three hours about those intercessions, which might otherwise be offered in one sixth part of that space."—["Journal of a Voyage from Savannah to Philadelphia," &c. by Wm. Seward; London, 1740.] (c)

Edwards, as we have seen by quotations already made from his works, believed in the special agency of the devil. He informs us that Satan "raged dreadfully at Northampton," at the time of the revival there. But in most of the recent accounts of revivals of religion, the special presence and agency of the devil is but obscurely mentioned, showing that in all probability the belief of his agency in human affairs will soon pass away.

### *Animal Magnetism.*

The phenomena of Animal Magnetism are strikingly similar to some of the foregoing, and I think go far to aid us in accounting for the surprising occurrences in Scotland, Kentucky, &c. and those which are witnessed in modern revivals. For full particulars respecting this important but still mysterious subject, and the process by which the phenomena are produced, I must refer the reader to the works on Animal Magnetism. For my present purpose it will be sufficient to quote a portion of

(c) The following extracts from a letter of the *Rev. Pere Surin, Jesuite exorciste des religieuses Ursulines de Loudon ecrite a un sien ami Jesuite*, details experiences very similar to those of Seward.—"I am in perpetual conversation with devils."—"I entered into combat with four devils, the most malicious of hell."—"For three months and a half, one devil has been constantly near me in my religious exercises," &c. &c. The whole letter is very interesting and will well repay perusal. It may be found in *Bertrand's Animal Magnetism*

the able Report of the Commissioners of the Faculty of the Academy of France, (*d*) employed by Louis XVI. to examine the pretensions of Mesmer and his disciples, respecting the cure of diseases, &c. by Animal Magnetism.

The Commissioners say that many women were magnetised at the same time, and in a crowded room where the air was hot and mephitic, and of itself disposing to affections of the head and nervous system. At first, however, the women magnetised do not exhibit any remarkable symptoms, but after about two hours, "the impressions, by little and little, are communicated from one to another, and re-enforced in the same manner as the impressions which are made by theatrical representations,—where the impressions are greater in proportion to the number of the spectators, and the liberty they enjoy of expressing their sensations. The applause by which the emotions of individuals are announced, occasions a general emotion, which every one partakes in the degree in which he is susceptible. The same observation has been made in armies upon a day of battle, where the enthusiasm of courage, as well as the impressions of terror, are propagated with so amazing rapidity. The drum, the sound of the military musical instruments, the noise of the cannon, the musketry, the shouts of the army, and the general disorder, impress the organs, and exalt the imagination in the same degree. In this equilibrium of inebriation, the external manifestation of a single sensation immediately becomes universal ; it hurries the soldiery to the charge, or it deter-

(*d*) Our illustrious Franklin was one of the Commissioners ;—the others were Bory, Lavoisier, Bailly, Majault, Sallin, d'Arcet, Guillotin and Le Roi. The report was drawn up by the unfortunate Bailly.

mines them to fly. In a numerous assembly, individuals are more subjected, than on other occasions, to their senses and their imagination ; and less capable of consulting and obeying the dictates of reason. Hence the origin of that religious frenzy, which formerly affected so powerfully both the minds and the bodies of the enthusiasts of the *Cevennes* ; and hence the acts of insanity into which public bodies are apt to be hurried, in times of political revolution. On this principle, it has been usual to forbid numerous assemblies in seditious towns, as a means of stopping a contagion so easily communicated. Every where example acts upon the moral part of our frame ; MECHANICAL IMITATION upon the physical. The minds of individuals are calmed by dispersing them ; and, by the same means, spasmodic affections, which are always infectious in their nature, may often be removed. Of this a recent example occurred in the young ladies of St. Roche, who were thus cured of the convulsions with which they were afflicted while assembled together.”\*

\* “ On the day of the ceremony of the first communion, celebrated in the parish church of St. Roche, a few years ago, (1780,) after the evening service, they made, according to custom, the procession through the streets. Scarcely were the children returned to the church, and had resumed their seats, before a young girl fell ill and had convulsions. The affection propagated itself with so much rapidity, that, in the space of half an hour, fifty or sixty girls, from twelve to nineteen years of age, were seized with the same convulsions ; that is, with a contraction of the throat, an inflation of the stomach, suffocation, hiccups, and spasms, more or less considerable. These accidents re-appeared in some instances in the course of the week ; but the following Sunday, being assembled with the dames of St. Anne, whose business it is to teach the young ladies, twelve of them were seized with the same convulsions, and more would have followed, if they had not had the precaution to send away each child upon the spot to her relations. The whole were obliged to be divided into several schools. By thus separating the children, and not keeping them together but in small numbers, three weeks sufficed to dissipate entirely this epidemical convulsive affection.”

“ The magnetism, then,” (the commissioners continue) “ or, rather, the operations of the imagination, are equally discoverable at the theatre, in the camp, and in all numerous assemblies, as at the bucket ; acting, indeed, by different means, but producing similar effects. The bucket is surrounded with a crowd of patients ; the sensations are continually communicated and recommunicated : the nerves are at last worn out with this exercise, and the woman of most sensibility in the company gives the signal. In the meantime, the men who are witnesses of these emotions partake of them in proportion to their nervous sensibility ; and those, with whom this sensibility is greatest, and most easily excited, become themselves the subjects of a crisis.”

The Rev. Grant Powers, A. M., pastor of the Congregational church in Haverhill, N. H., in an Essay, (too much neglected) upon “ the Influence of the Imagination on the Nervous System, contributing to a false hope in Religion,” after referring to the phenomena produced by Animal Magnetism, says—“ Now in view of what has been adduced to show the astonishing influence of the imagination over the human system, let us suppose that Mesmer and Deslon had been ecclesiastics ; that they had inculcated the idea on this class of persons, that religion in a high degree, produced similar effects on the human body ; and that without religion they must be damned ;—suppose they had endeavored by all possible means to excite their apprehensions, to raise their animal feelings, and by hurried, boisterous, and long addresses, they had kept their minds strained intensely for hours in succession, yea, whole days and nights ;—and have we not reason to believe, that similar effects would have followed ? and when one had ex-

hibited these symptoms, another, and another, would do the same ? Such a result would be natural, as in the case of animal magnetism : especially, if when one arose from the paroxysm, he was taught by those whom he considered his superiors, to believe that he emerged from a state of endless condemnation to a state of justification, life and peace ; should hear his conversion proclaimed by a multitude of voices, and should join his own, also, to the quire, in a song of praise for his deliverance. And as these affections would be involuntary and real effects, the subjects of them would ascribe them to the supernatural influence of the Spirit of God, and the deception might be fatal.”

The portion of the Report which I have just quoted, has also been referred to by Dugald Stewart, in his chapter on “ the Principle or Law of Sympathetic Imitation,” in the third volume of his *Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind*. His own remarks which follow, have so direct a bearing on our subject, and in my opinion will go so far to explain much that is mysterious or miraculous in modern revivals, that I beg for them the careful attention of the reader.

“ A very interesting and authentic collection of facts, tending to illustrate still farther this article, in the natural history of man, has since been published by the late Dr. Haygarth, in his ‘ *Essay on the Imagination, as a cause and as a cure of the disorders of the body ; exemplified by fictitious tractors and epidemical convulsions.*’

“ Leaving, however, to medical theorists the consideration of such cases as fall peculiarly within the circle of their professional pursuits, I shall confine myself chiefly to phenomena of more frequent recurrence, and more accessible to common observation. I would beg leave, at

the same time, to recommend warmly to my successors in this branch of study, a careful examination and comparison of the details connected, both with the use of tractors, and with the practice of animal magnetism,—as inestimable *data* for extending our knowledge of the laws which regulate the connexion between the human mind, and our bodily organization. The lights, more particularly, which they throw on various questions relative to the Imagination, are such, as must forever entitle Mesmer and Perkins to the gratitude of those who cultivate the Philosophy of the Mind ; whatever the motives may have been which suggested the experiments of these practitioners, or whatever the occasional mischiefs of which they may have been the authors.

“ In the extract already quoted from the Report of the Commissioners, a reference is made to the infectious tendency of religious enthusiasm ; a tendency which they seem very justly to ascribe, in a great measure, to the violent bodily agitations which it is apt to produce, and the rapidity with which such agitations are propagated among a crowd. As an example of this, they mention the enthusiasts of the *Cevennes*, commonly known by the name of *Camisards*. Some other instances of the same kind which occurred in Scotland, at the time of Mr. Whitefield’s first visit to this country, are stated, upon unquestionable authority, in the Statistical Account of the Parish of Cambuslang. The particulars, however, which I am now to quote, form, if possible, a still more authentic document on the subject, as they rest on the testimony of a writer, well qualified by his abilities to describe with accuracy whatever fell under his observation ; and whose peculiar religious tenets exempt him from any suspicion of having mingled, on

this occasion, any ludicrous exaggerations with the facts which he records. The writer I allude to is Mr. Barclay, the well known author of the Apology for the Quakers, who thus endeavours to point out the salutary consequences to be expected, in a religious point of view, from their *meetings*, even when all verbal intercourse is suspended.

“ ‘ Such is the evident certainty of that divine strength that is communicated by thus meeting together, and in waiting in silence upon God, that sometimes when one hath come in, that hath been unwatchful and wandering in his mind, this power, being in a good measure raised in the whole meeting, will suddenly lay hold upon his spirit, and wonderfully help to raise up the good in him ; begetting in him a sense of the same power, to the melting and warming of his heart, even as the warmth would take hold of a man that is cold, coming near a stove ; or as a flame will lay hold of some little combustible matter lying near it. Yea, sometimes when there is not a word in the meeting, but all are silently waiting,—if one comes in that is rude and wicked, and in whom the power of darkness prevaieth much, if the whole meeting be gathered into the life, it will strike terror into such a one, and he will feel himself unable to resist. Sometimes the power of God will break forth into a whole meeting, and there will be such an inward travail, while each is seeking to overcome the evil in themselves, that by the strong working of these opposite powers, (the evil and the good,) like the going of two contrary tides, every individual will be strongly exercised as in a day of battle, and thereby trembling and motion of body will be upon most, if not upon all. And from this the name of Quakers or Tremblers was

first reproachfully cast upon us ; which, though it be none of our choosing, yet in this respect we are not ashamed of it, but have rather reason to rejoice, even that we are sensible of this power that hath oftentimes laid hold on our adversaries, and made them yield unto us, and join with us, and confess to the truth, *before they had any distinct or decisive knowledge of our doctrines ; so that sometimes many at one meeting have been thus convinced ; and this power would sometimes also reach to, and wonderfully work, even in little children, to the admiration and astonishment of many.*”

“ Facts of this kind, when so completely authenticated, not only form a curious accession to the history of our species, but furnish matter of important reflection to the philosophical statesman ; and, indeed, to all those who have occasion to manage the passions of assembled multitudes. Before, however, I proceed to the consideration of the practical inferences which they suggest, it may be useful to state a few miscellaneous conclusions arising from the foregoing induction ; together with some incidental remarks tending to illustrate a little more fully one or two points which have been touched on more slightly than their importance deserved.

“ 1st. Among these conclusions, one of the most interesting is, the contagious nature of certain bodily affections, even when unaccompanied with any mental passion or emotion. This appears from the rapidity with which convulsive and hysterical disorders are propagated among a crowd. It is of importance, however, to recollect, (although, perhaps, to some the caution may appear superfluous and trifling,) that this contagion is not, like that of a fever, the immediate consequence of

unconscious vicinity, or even of contact. It operates, some how or other, through the medium of the *mind*; inasmuch as it necessarily implies a knowledge or perception (received either by the eye or by the ear) of the agitated condition of the person from whom the affection is caught. This perception, it would seem, when the symptoms of the disorder are such as to impress the mind deeply, has a tendency of itself to bring the body of the *percipient* into a condition similar to that of his neighbor; more especially when, from an irritability of system, any predisposition to such spasmodic affections exists. To whatever principle this may be referred, and by whatever name, whether of *imitation* or of *sympathy*, we may choose to distinguish it, the general fact is sufficiently ascertained by observation and experience; and it seems to be perfectly analogous to some of those which have been already treated of in the foregoing sections of this chapter. From the Report of the French Commissioners, and, indeed, from facts which are familiar to every one, it appears farther, that although *the ear* is not without its share in contributing occasionally to such effects, yet *the eye* (which has been justly called the Prime Minister of the Imagination) is, in most instances, by far the principal agent or instrument concerned.

“ It is a question worthy of more attention than has yet been bestowed upon it by physicians, whether certain kinds of insanity have not a contagious tendency, somewhat analogous to that which has just been remarked. That the incoherent ravings and frantic gestures of a mad man have a singularly painful effect in unsettling and deranging the thoughts of others, I have more than once experienced in myself: nor have I ever

looked upon this most afflicting of all spectacles, without a strong impression of the danger to which I should be exposed, if I were to witness it daily. In consequence of this impression, I have always read with peculiar admiration, the scene in the Tragedy of Lear, which forms the transition from the old king's beautiful and pathetic reflections on the storm, to the violent madness in which, without any change whatever in his external circumstances, he is immediately after represented. In order to make this transition more gradual, the poet introduces Edgar, who, with a view of concealing himself from Lear, assumes the dress and behaviour of a madman. At every sentence he utters, the mind of the king, "*whose wits*" (as we are told in the preceding scene) were "*beginning to turn,*" becomes more and more deranged, till at length every vestige of reason vanishes completely.

"2d. As bodily affections seem to be, in certain cases, contagious, where they are altogether unaccompanied by any mental passion or emotion, so, on the other hand, the passions and emotions felt, or supposed to be felt by one individual, have a tendency to spread among his companions, even without the intervention of any external expression manifested in the appearance. This effect will be acknowledged by every man of sensibility, when a person who has lately received any signal instance either of good or bad fortune, enters a numerous assembly; and it is sufficiently accounted for, by our natural disposition to sympathize with the feelings of those with whom we associate. Where a number of men, however, are collected upon any occasion of common concern, and on which the feelings of all may be expected to be in unison,—on any occasion, for instance

of public festivity or of public mourning,—the impression produced in each will be greatly augmented ; and it is accordingly apt, in such cases, to vent itself in tears, either of joy or sorrow, even among characters whom the event in question would, in their solitary hours, have scarcely affected with any emotion whatsoever.

“The devotional feelings are, in like manner, roused and exalted merely by the presence of others met together in the same place of worship ; and *that* independently of any external rite, and often when all around are composed and silent.

“3d. When the two former suppositions are combined,—that is, when the feelings of a crowd are in unison, or conceived to be in unison, from the operation of some common cause, and when, at the same time, these feelings begin, in a few individuals, to manifest themselves by strong bodily agitations, the effect is likely to be incalculably great : the mind at once acting on the body, and the body re-acting on the mind, while the influence of each is manifested by the inexplicable contagion of sympathetic imitation.”

It appears to me that a satisfactory explanation of the following account from Mr. Finney's first Lecture on Revivals, may be obtained by aid of the above observations, without supposing any special agency of the Holy Spirit.

“An individual (says the account) went into a manufactory to see the machinery. His mind was solemn, as he had been where there was a revival. The people who labored there, all knew him by sight, and knew who he was. A young lady who was at work, saw him, and whispered some foolish remark to her companion and laughed. The person stopped and looked at her

with a feeling of grief. She stopped, her thread broke, and she was so much agitated she could not join it. She looked out at the window to compose herself, and then tried again; again and again she strove to recover her self-command. At length she sat down, overcome with her feelings. The person then approached and spoke with her; she soon manifested a deep sense of sin. The feeling spread through the establishment like fire, and in a few hours, almost every person employed there was under conviction, so much so, that the owners, though worldly men, were astounded, and requested to have the works stop and have a prayer meeting; for they said it was a great deal more important to have these people converted than to have the works go on. And in a few days, the owners and nearly every person employed in the establishment were hopefully converted. The eye of this individual, his solemn countenance, his compassionate feeling, rebuked the levity of the young woman, and brought her under conviction of sin: and this whole revival followed, probably in a great measure, from so small an incident."

In conclusion, I take the liberty to request intelligent men, particularly clergymen, to read the foregoing accounts of Revivals, those found in the religious periodicals of the day, Finney's Lectures, Spragues Lectures, and the letters appended to them, and then carefully peruse accounts of the *Convulsionnaires of St. Medard*, and of the *Trembleurs des Cevennes*, and of the effects of *Animal Magnetism*, together with the remarks of Mr. Stewart and those of the Rev. Mr. Powers; and ask themselves if there is no way to account for modern revivals of religion, but by supposing them to be caused by the *special influence* of the Holy Spirit of God.

We see by the above accounts—

I. That all the outward signs spoken of in revivals—all the visible appearances, the tremblings, convulsions, sighing, &c. may have other causes. (*a*)

II. That it will not do to rely on *feelings*, as evidence of the presence and agency of the Spirit of God. Attend to what Locke says of those who maintain that “they feel the impulses of the Spirit, and cannot be mistaken in what they feel.” “They are sure because they are sure: and their persuasions are right because they are strong in them. For, when what they say is stripped of the metaphor of seeing and feeling, this is all it amounts to: and yet these similes so impose on them, that they serve them for certainty in themselves, and demonstration to others.” (*b*) Besides if we do rely upon “feelings” as evidence, we must admit the claims of the French Prophets, of Mr. Irving and his followers,

(*a*) “Convulsions have always afflicted mankind, for they depend equally upon the organization and the imagination, and they are complicated with mental alienation. The Priestesses, Sybils, and Pythonesses, entered into convulsions when the prophetic spirit seized them. The *possessed* were taken with convulsions, when the delirium was intense, some became furious maniacs, and enraged and died. This termination, frequent in nervous diseases, was regarded as the last effort of the devil, who, constrained to quit the body, aided to deceive the multitude. In reading the history of cases of Demonology reported by authors, or the legal processes made against the *possessed*, we acquire the conviction, that the convulsions, contortions and great muscular contractions, mentioned as extraordinary efforts of the devil, are nothing but nervous symptoms, such as we see exhibited by the hysterical, hypochondrical and epileptic, who do not suppose themselves agitated by the *Malign Spirit*.”—Esquirol. Dict. Med. Scien. Art. Demonomania.

(*b*) Locke's Essays. See his whole chapter on enthusiasm.

of the modern Perfectionists, and of numerous other wild fanatics, to inspiration. (c)

III. The Holy Scriptures *positively* do not warrant us in believing that modern revivals are caused by the special outpouring of the Spirit of God. If they can be so construed as to partially justify the opinions of Mr. Irving and those who claim the "gift of tongues," the "spirit of prophecy," &c. they certainly cannot be so construed as to favor those of the modern revivalists.

(c) We scarcely see a religious newspaper but what contains allusions to this kind of miraculous interposition of the Almighty. In a late "appeal to the public in behalf of the Theological Institute of Connecticut," established at East Windsor, the trustees of that institution, after stating that their dissatisfaction with the religious doctrines taught at New Haven was among the reasons which led to the establishment of the Institute, say "they did not embark in this enterprise without much deliberation; that they looked to the great Head of the church for direction;" and add, that "unless they were greatly deceived, they enjoyed *special tokens of his presence.*" Now what were these special tokens? was the house shaken, or did any thing occur that was evident to the senses that could not be accounted for without supposing the "*special presence*" of the Almighty? Or were they evidenced, merely by feelings of an unusual kind; if so, did all the trustees have the same—and were they so different from any they ever before experienced, that calm, sensible men, were forced to believe they were specially imparted to them at that time from on high for the purpose of indicating to them that the Almighty approved of the Institute? But above all, how were the Professors of Theology at New Haven affected at this same hour? Surely, if the Almighty appeared in a special manner to the Professors of Theology at East Windsor, and approved of their undertaking, the Professors at New Haven would have had some special intimation from the same source to abandon their course. But after all, we presume these worthy men assembled at East Windsor had no *special tokens* at all, they merely used in their "appeal" the *cant phrase of the times*. But as I have said, much in this way innumerable errors and marvellous stories have gone forth and been credited. See lives of Roman Catholic Saints, their visions, special revelations, &c.—See also Wesley's Journal, and George Fox's Journal. Harken also to *Swedenbourg*:

"In 1743 it pleased the Lord to manifest himself to me, and to appear to me personally, to give me a knowledge of the Spiritual world, and to put me in communion with angels and spirits, and this has been continued to me since."

IV. Does the "*fruit*" of these revivals force us to believe that nothing but the *special influence* of the Holy Spirit causes them?

The "fruit of the Spirit," (though not of its special influence, for this was accompanied by miraculous gifts,) is said in the New Testament to be—"love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." Whether such are the results of modern revivals, let others judge. It is to be presumed, however, that many who read the accounts of the dissensions, wranglings, and violent disputes (*d*) among the religious sects who believe in revivals, and among individuals of the same sect, will be skeptical on this point.

Reasoning and intelligent men will be slow to believe that those who "manifest the works of the flesh," which are said to be "witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies," are entirely

(*d*) See an account of an important Convention at New Lebanon, on the subject of Revivals; in the New York Observer, August 4, 1827. Read the doings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian church, of which Finney (p. 269) says—"These things in the Presbyterian church, their contentions and janglings are so ridiculous, so wicked, so outrageous, that no doubt there is a jubilee in hell every year, about the time of the meeting of the General Assembly." See also the denunciations of the "old measure" and the "new measure" men, one of another, and of one another's measures and revivals;—notice the great disagreement, as to what is a "genuine," and what a "spurious" revival;—read the "appeals to the Public," from the Theological schools in this State, denouncing the views and religious opinions of each other, and the charges of heresy brought against noted divines and revivalists, by other noted divines and revivalists;—examine the columns of the N. Y. Evangelist, the Albany Journal and Telegraph, the Boston Recorder, and other religious periodicals of the last few years;—and Sprague's and Finney's Lectures on Revivals; "Matthias and his impostures, or the Progress of Fanaticism," by Wm. L. Stone; Drs. Reed and Mattheson's "visit to the American churches;" "A portrait of what are called "*new measures*, as they appeared in the county of Berkshire, (Mass.)" &c.

“led by the Holy Spirit.” And if they follow the individuals who are said to have been converted at revivals, by the special influence of the Holy Spirit, and find them, though moral and respectable people, to be no better in any respect than other moral and respectable men, and still exhibiting the same desire for wealth, office and worldly distinction, that others do who do not profess to have undergone any change, and as they themselves did previous to their conversion, they may not fully believe a change of disposition has been experienced, which nothing but the Spirit of God could effect, and in consequence of which “the soul which had hitherto loved and chose sin, now loves and chooses holiness.”

Again—all revivalists admit that many who appear to be converted at revivals, are not. Such instances are quite numerous and deserve much attention. It would throw much light on the subject we are considering, if we could have full and accurate details of such cases, and ascertain *what it was* that caused for a time feelings and conduct such as are said to be caused by the special influence of the Holy Spirit. May it not be that the same cause, no matter what it is, which for a time produced the feelings alluded to, produces those feelings, and leads to that course of conduct through life in others, which is regarded as not incompatible with the nature of this great change. Generally those who are supposed to be converted at revivals, in a few days or months make a public profession of religion, and are admitted as church members; and every one knows that the rules of church discipline are not so severe as to require any different conduct of its members, than the

customs of society require of all men who claim to be moral and respectable inhabitants.

That these converts at revivals soon "grow cold and stupid towards divine things," seems to be an admitted fact, for the works of revivalists abound with lamentations respecting the coldness and lukewarmness of the church, and want of religious zeal in church members. I therefore think it not unreasonable to suppose that those who "join the church," during or soon after these awakenings, have not met with any remarkable change,—not greater perhaps, than in the instances, now happily numerous, of men who on reflection, conclude to use or vend no more alcoholic drink,—but that the natural wish to appear consistent, and often a habit, leads them so to conduct as to be considered by the church to which they belong, as having once experienced that very remarkable change which nothing but the special influence of the Spirit of God could produce.

V. Do the lives of those men of past ages,—men illustrious for their piety,—men who have been the firmest and ablest advocates of Christianity—men who have been the bulwark of the Protestant religion, teach us that they were thus affected and converted? Were the views of modern revivalists taught by them? On this subject let others examine and determine for themselves. I have examined it to a considerable extent, and am compelled to say they were not.

Paley, an able advocate for the doctrine of the influence of the Spirit, says—"I do not apprehend that the doctrine of spiritual influence carries the agency of the Deity much farther than the doctrine of Providence carries it, or farther than the doctrine of prayer carries it ;

for all prayer supposes the Deity to be intimate with our minds." In this view of the subject I concur; and also agree with him that "the agency of the Holy Spirit in our souls, distinctly perceived, is, properly speaking, a miracle, but that we are not at present under a miraculous dispensation." (a)

Many other objections to modern revivals present themselves, especially—why, if they are caused by the special influence of the Holy Spirit, are means not sanctioned by Scripture resorted to, during these supposed outpourings?—means of themselves calculated to produce all the outward signs, the anxiety, &c. Why multiply and prolong meetings at such times, unless it be to produce an excitement of mind and body, incompatible with the calm exercise of the reasoning powers? But I leave to others the task of bringing forward the other objections. I have already extended my remarks beyond what I had intended; but the vast importance of the subject, and the full belief that modern revivals are injurious to health, together with the conviction that whatever has been enjoined by Christ is not so; has led me to attempt to show, in this and the succeeding

(a) Paley's doctrine of conversion is also consistent and scriptural. This great and good divine, says,—“It has been usual to divide all mankind into two classes, the converted and unconverted: and by so dividing them, to infer the necessity of conversion to every person whatever. In proposing the subject under this form, we state the distinction, in my opinion, too absolutely, and draw from it a conclusion too universal: because there is a class and description of Christians, who having been previously educated, and having persevered in those pious courses into which they were first brought, are not conscious to themselves of ever having been without the influence of religion, of ever having lost sight of its sanctions, of ever having renounced them.”—See his Sermon on the Doctrine of Conversion.

chapter, the incorrectness of the opinion, that they are owing to the special influence of the Holy Spirit; and that this opinion has heretofore and is still likely to produce fanatical conduct injurious to the health and physical welfare of the inhabitants of this country.

## CHAPTER VII.

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INJURY OF THE BRAIN AND NERVOUS SYSTEM, FROM FREQUENT MEETINGS AND RELIGIOUS EXCITEMENTS AND DOCTRINES. DANGER OF AN INCREASE OF INSANITY, APOPLEXY, PALSY, EPILEPSY, CONVULSIONS, HYDROCEPHALUS, TIC DOLOREUX, AND ALL NERVOUS DISEASES FROM THE ABOVE CAUSES.—PARTICULARLY INJURIOUS TO FEMALES.—CAUTIONS AND ADVICE TO CLERGYMEN.

An intimate connexion between the mind and the body has always been admitted ; though metaphysicians and physiologists have disagreed respecting the particular organs by which the mind acts, or in which it is seated. There seems, however, now to be no question but that the nervous system is more particularly than any other, concerned in all the mental operations, and is the medium of communication between the intellectual and corporeal powers. We are, however, as yet, very far from understanding thoroughly, this intimate connexion and sympathy, though from modern researches, and the accumulations of physiological and pathological observations, we now know much more respecting it than was known fifty years since, or in the time of Wesley and Edwards. The following appear now to be well established truths on this subject :—

I. The brain, or that nervous mass contained within the skull, is the material organ of all the mental faculties—the instrument by which all psychological actions are performed.

This is now so generally acknowledged, that I need not, perhaps, spend any time in attempting to prove it. It is, however, a fact of exceedingly great and practical importance ; though it seems to be but very little regarded, especially by the instructors of youth and religious teachers. They are extremely anxious not to injure the stomach, by too greatly taxing its digestive powers, and are very desirous to learn what course of diet will injure it, in order that they may avoid that course ; but at the same time, they are utterly regardless of injuring the brain, by too greatly exciting the mind. If they do acknowledge, in words, that the brain is the organ by which the mind is manifested, they do not appear to consider or to realise, what of course is true, if such is the office of the brain ; that all mental emotions must excite the brain, increase its action, and tax its powers ; and if severe or long continued, will as assuredly injure it, as too much or too stimulating food will injure the stomach. They do not appear to realize that the “sorrow and agony,”—the “joy and rapture,” mentioned as occurring in modern revivals, will produce commotion in the brain and nervous system, and disturb their action as certainly as powerful stimulants will thus affect the stomach if taken into it ; and if long continued, will injure the brain as certainly as the repetition of stimulants will the stomach.

But, in fact, there is far more danger in the former case than in the latter, because the brain is a more important and ruling organ in the system, and being con-

nected with every part of the body by the nerves, whatever exhausts or injures the brain, must necessarily affect the whole system. If, therefore, a number of people be kept for a long time in a state of great terror and mental anxiety, no matter whether from vivid descriptions of hell, and fears of "dropping immediately into it," or from any other cause, the brain and nervous system of such a people is as liable to be injured, as the stomach and digestive organs are from the frequent use, during the same length of time, of very stimulating food and drink. In both cases, the majority would not probably be visibly injured or affected, or but for a short time; but every one knows that the body is injured by revelry and debauch, though not more certainly than by long continued terror and anxiety of mind.(a)

Now all this must be true, if it be true that the brain is the organ by which the mind acts; and this is a fact, as I have said, generally acknowledged, and is supported by as much proof as can be brought to support almost any thing we believe in regard to the causes of disease. This was the opinion of Galen, who called the brain "the grand organ of the intellect." Galen was received as good authority by the Greeks and Arabians, down to the 15th century. This was also the opinion of Newton, Locke, Boerhaave, Haller, Morgagni, Soemering, Cullen, Hunter and Rush; and is believed by all distinguished philosophers and physiologists, among whom are Richerand, Magendi, Rudolphi, Cuvier, Tissot, Riel,

(a) Some contend that alcoholic drinks are not injurious, because their neighbors and many of their acquaintances have been in the use of them for years, and have enjoyed good health. But that such drinks do injure the system, especially if taken frequently, and so as to excite the system, is generally admitted. But there is no better proof of it, than that great and long continued mental excitement affects the brain.

Fontana, Home, Bell, Le Gallois, Whytt, Greding, Loder, Flourens, Desmouliens, Louis, Serres, Elliotson, Lallemand, Broussais, Meckel, Haslam, Prichard, Burrows, Blumenbach, Pinel, Georget, Esquirol, Foville, Andral, and innumerable others, who found their belief on numerous physiological and pathological observations. (b)

II. It is also well established that all excitement of the mind increases the action of the brain. This is susceptible of positive proof.

Sometimes when the mental excitement is very great, instant death is produced from the rupture of a blood vessel in the brain, causing apoplexy. Sudden death from the "violence of passion," often mentioned by poets and novelists (c) is not a fiction. This we can easily believe, when we see the greatly increased rush of blood to the head in anger, causing the whole countenance to become flushed. Brichetau relates the case of a young officer, who on receiving the insult of a blow in public, became immediately crazy, and died in convulsions. Sometimes sudden joy causes death. This is recorded of a Roman lady on meeting her son as he returned

(b) A writer in the *Christian Spectator* also admits this fact, and refers for illustration of it, to the work of the author on the "Influence of Mental Cultivation upon Health." See *Christian Spectator*, for Sept. 1833.

(c) See death of Sir Brian du Bois Gilbert, in the second volume of *Ivanhoe*, by Sir Walter Scott. Also death of Haidee, in fourth canto of Lord Byron's *Don Juan*, and the note illustrative of it. I am here tempted to remark, that Scott and Byron, of all fictitious writers whose works I have read, are physiologically most correct. I have noticed that many other writers, far less popular, are also very incorrect, physiologically. To be sure, they are not like Shakspeare, Scott and Byron, accurate and minute observers, but had they studied physiology, they could not have made the mistakes they have. Why is not this important science taught in all our schools and colleges ?

from the battle of Cannae, in which she had supposed he was killed. It is said that Diagoras, Chilo, and Sophocles, died of joy. The door-keeper of Congress expired on hearing of the surrender of Cornwallis. Such cases are exceedingly numerous, and arise from the increased action of the heart and circulating system, by which more blood is sent to the head than can be sustained. Sometimes, however, as Bichat remarks, "the influence of the passions upon the organs of circulation is so violent, as to stop the play of those organs."

Grief also often causes sudden death. Philip V. died suddenly on hearing of the defeat of his army. The Doge Francis Foscari, expired on hearing of his deposition, and the appointment of his successor. Recently a man by the name of Hills was apprehended in New York for theft. He was taken before the police in perfect health, but mental agony caused the blood to gush from his nose, and being carried out, he died. Many cases of sudden death, caused by grief and fright, especially of children, are mentioned in Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, and in medical works. Sir Astley Cooper, in his surgical lectures, after stating that grief, anger and fear, have great influence in producing disease and in retarding recovery from wounds and injuries, relates instances of death from these affections of the mind. One of them I subjoin.

"A child, for some trifling offence, was put, by her schoolmistress, into a dark cellar: the child was dreadfully frightened at the idea of being put there, and cried violently during the hour that she was confined. When she returned to her parents in the evening, she burst into tears, and begged that she might not be put into the cellar; the parents thought this extremely odd, and as-

sured her that there was no danger of their being guilty of so great an act of cruelty ; but it was difficult to pacify her, and when put to bed she passed a restless night. On the following day she had fever, during which she frequently exclaimed—"Do not put me in the cellar." The fourth day after, she was brought to my house in Broad-street, in a high state of fever, with delirium, frequently muttering—"Pray do not put me in the cellar !" and when I inquired the reason, I found that the parents had learnt the punishment to which she had been subjected. I ordered what I conceived likely to relieve the fever, but the child died in a week after this unfeeling conduct."

No doubt great mental exertion, even when the passions are not greatly excited, may cause sudden death, by determining the blood to the head so as to produce apoplexy. Thus we account for the numerous instances of sudden death among eminent public speakers during their bursts of eloquence.

Medical books contain innumerable instances of the danger to be apprehended from violent or long continued mental excitement, all serving to establish the fact that whatever excites the mind, excites and stimulates the brain. But still more positive proof has been furnished by Sir Astley Cooper, who says—"A young gentleman was brought to me from the north of England, who had lost a portion of his skull just above the eyebrow. On examining the head, I distinctly saw the pulsations of the brain, which were regular and slow ; but at this time he was agitated by some opposition to his wishes, and directly the pulsations of the brain were increased, and became more violent, and more blood rushed to the brain. If, therefore, you omit to keep the mind free from

agitation, your other means will be unavailing in injuries of the head.\*

The same author mentions another similar case; that of a young man, who had an opening in his skull from a wound, through which he could see an increased action in the brain, whenever any thing occurred, even in conversation, to agitate the mind of the patient.

The following case is related by M. Broussais. M. Thavernier, a captain in the ——— regiment, forty-two years of age, moderately stout, but well formed, received in the middle of the Palais Royal, in May, 1815, ninety days before his death, a letter containing *bad news*. Whilst perusing it, he remained motionless, as if thunderstruck, and the left side of his face became paralysed, and drawn to the opposite side. He was taken to Val de Grace, and attended to. At this time he had complete paralysis of the arm, thigh, and leg of the right side, and was unable to speak. After using various remedies for more than two months, he began to improve, and became so much better as to be able to stand up, and to speak, although with difficulty.

In this state of improvement, M. Thavernier received another letter, said to be from his wife: he read it, and instantly there occurred loss of speech, general immobility, abolition of sense, and complete apoplexy. He died in three days after this attack, and, on examining the head, there was found engorgement of blood in the sinuses, and several abscesses were observed in the substance of the brain, and other marks of organic disease. M. Broussais considers this a case of chronic inflammation of the brain induced by a moral cause.”†

\*Lectures on Surgery, &c.

†History of Chronic Phlegmasiæ, by F. J. V. Broussais, Vol. 1.

Evidence of the same fact, that all excitement of the mind increases the action of the brain, is furnished by Blumenbach, who relates the case of a person who had been trepanned, and whose brain was observed to sink when he was asleep and swell out when he was awake.

III. In the same manner, mental excitement, by increasing the momentum of blood to the brain, causes insanity, epilepsy, convulsions, organic affections of the heart, and many of the most dangerous diseases. Insanity is not, as some may suppose, merely a derangement of mind, a disease of the immortal spirit itself, but it is a disease of the brain. The immortal and immaterial mind is, surely, incapable of disease, of decay and derangement; but being allied to a material organ, upon which it is entirely dependent for its manifestations upon earth, these manifestations are suspended or disordered when this organ is diseased.

The phrase *derangement of mind*, conveys an erroneous idea; for such derangement is only a symptom of disease in the head, and is not the primary affection. It is true, that moral and mental causes may produce insanity, but they produce it by first occasioning either functional or organic disease of the brain. On examining the heads of those who die insane, some disease of the brain or its appendages is generally found. I have examined the heads of several individuals who had been insane, and in every instance some disease of the brain was very apparent.

Doctor Haslam says, that insanity is always connected with organic alterations of the brain. Greding has noticed thickening of the skull in one hundred and sixty-seven cases out of two hundred and sixteen, besides other organic diseases. Spurzheim says he *always*

found changes of structure in the heads of insane people. M. Georget dissected a great number of brains, and his experience is conformable to that of the authors above mentioned. Many others who have had frequent opportunities of examining the heads of those who die insane, confirm the preceding, and establish this important truth, that *the brain, the material organ of the mind, must become diseased before the manifestations of the mind can be pronounced deranged.*

The causes of this disease are generally moral commotions. "Those causes (says Mr. Georget) which tend to derange the brain by the very exercise of its own functions, are the most frequent, nay, almost the only causes capable of producing mental alienation. (*d*)

No other disease, probably, is increasing faster in our country than insanity, and from investigations recently made in several of the northern states, there is reason to fear that it already prevails here to a greater extent than in any other country. (*e*) This, however, is not strange, for insanity is a disease that always prevails most in countries where the people enjoy civil and religious freedom, and where all are induced, or are at liberty to engage in the strife for wealth, and for the highest honors and distinctions of society. We need therefore to be exceedingly careful not to add other causes to those already existing, of this most deplorable disease. And in nothing should we be more careful, in order to avoid inducing insanity, than in powerfully exciting the minds of the young, and particularly of females, and especially on religion. In all ages, this has been one of the most fruitful sources of this disease. Dr. Burrows, on this

(*d*) "De La Folie," &c. by M. Georget, M. D. &c. Paris, 1820.

(*e*) On this subject, see my appendix to Spurzheim on insanity.

subject, says—"Were I to allege one cause, which I thought was operating with more force than another, to increase the victims of insanity, I should pronounce, that it was the overweening zeal with which it is attempted to impress on youth the subtle distinctions of theology and an unrelenting devotion to a dubious doctrine. I have seen so many melancholy cases of young and excellently disposed persons, of respectable families, deranged, from either ill-suited or ill-timed religious communication, that I cannot avoid impugning such conduct as an infatuation, which, as long as persevered in, will be a fruitful source of moral evil. The old Romans knew human nature better; they had a law which forbade any person entering upon the sacerdotal office before the age of fifty. This was to prevent theological discussions before an age was attained when a bad effect was not to be apprehended." Other writers on this disease confirm the above statement. M. Georget says,—  
"Excess of religious ideas produce different shapes of madness, according to the individual's character. Superstition united with ambition, and the desire of empire, give birth to intolerant and persecuting fanaticism, to the desire of ruling in God's name, and of making converts. With the subdued spirit, *outrée* religion produces panophobia, fear of divine chastisement, and demonomania. Finally, its singular union with amorous passions, excites ecstatic love of God, the Virgin, or some saint."

"Strong emotions," says Dr. Prichard, "excited by vehement preaching, produce continually, in females and very sensitive persons, fits of hysteria, and in those who are predisposed to mania there can be no doubt that similar causes give rise to attacks of madness. *Cases*

*indeed, are of continued occurrence which establish the fact.*"—[*Cyclopaedia of Practical Medicine.*]

*Epilepsy and Convulsions.* These diseases of the nervous system are also quite prevalent, and are evidently increasing. Doct. Baillie of London, speaking of Epilepsy, says—"it has become much more frequent within the last twenty years than formerly."

They are also produced by mental agitation, as is evident from the testimony of innumerable authors who have written upon this subject. Of all the passions of the mind which produce these, probably no one is so powerful as terror. A celebrated German physician, (Locker,) says, that in six out of ten cases of epilepsy under his care, at the Hospital of St. Mark, at Vienna, the disease was occasioned by terror. (*a*)

Convulsions from terror, alarm and grief, are quite common. Such cases are so numerous in medical works, that I scarcely need refer particularly to them. They will be found in most writers on nervous diseases, and numerous cases are recorded in the periodical works. But as minute details of cases are more impressive than general references, I will transcribe one from M. Pinel on diseases of the Medulla Spinalis.

"*Case 2.* Felicia Lepoigny, of sanguineous temperament, enjoyed good health till her 15th year. At this time, being frightened by the entrance of the Russian soldiers into the village, and the rude conduct of one of them towards her, she was seized with a paroxysm of epilepsy, which returned, with shortening intervals, until

(*a*) See "Cooke on Nervous diseases," for numerous cases of Epilepsy produced by the same cause.

her intellectual faculties gave way, and she was conducted to the Salpetriere in 1816, in a state of complete idiotism, complicated with epilepsy, attacking her every four or five days. In this state she continued, without any material alteration, for four years. In January, 1820, a succession of dreadful paroxysms of epilepsy and convulsions terminated her wretched existence.

“*Autopsia.* Dura mater strongly adherent to the skull, especially in the right parietal fossa, tunica arachnoidea healthy, but rather injected—substance of the brain unaffected—excepting turgescence of its vessels. The cerebellum was rather soft but sound. The spinal brain being laid open its whole length, presented a great turgescence of its nervous system. Towards the dorsal region a disorganization was found in the medullary substance, extending from the plexus of nerves going to the arms, as far as the lumbar region. The thorax and abdomen presented no organic lesion.”

The same author relates other cases, having similar terminations, exhibiting similar appearances after death, and produced by mental agitation. (*b*)

It must have been noticed by every practitioner of medicine, and it is also evident from the increased number of publications on the subject, that diseases, arising from *irritation of the Medulla Spinalis*, have greatly multiplied of late. From the works just cited, and from other pathological observations, there is great reason to fear that this disease is frequently produced by moral

(*b*) See *Recherches sur l'Inflammation De l'Arachnoide, Cerebrale, et Spinale*; par Parent-Duchatelet et L. Martinet; for many cases exhibiting the powerful effect of *moral causes* in producing disorder of the brain and nervous system. See similar cases in “*Medical and Philosophical commentaries, by a society in Edinburgh.*” vols. 1 and 3.

causes;—by agitation and anxiety of mind, not severe enough to produce the fatal disorders alluded to, but sufficient to cause irritation of this important portion of the nervous system, and to give rise to the distressing symptoms we notice in that disease.

*Diseases of the heart*, have also multiplied of late, and are frequently caused by terror, alarm and mental excitement, as Corvisart, Testa and other writers on these diseases inform us. But on this subject the reader is referred to my work on the “*Influence of Mental Cultivation upon Health*,” second edition, p. 85.

IV. Long continued or great mental anxiety, though it does not always cause the above violent and often fatal diseases, may produce irritation of the brain and nervous system, and give rise to melancholy, hypochondriasis, tic-doloureux, and other nervous affections. The irritation of the brain, caused by mental emotion, often acts on other organs, and gives rise to diseases of the stomach, and increases all local diseases.

“Those local complaints which appear to originate spontaneously, or in some cases where a slight wound has been inflicted, I believe to be only symptomatic of a general irritability of the brain and nervous system. The almost constant failure of topical remedies, and of the division of the affected nerve, must lead to the conclusion that the cause of the local diseased action, or primary affection, must reside in some other part of the body; and if we inquire into the causes of the local active affections of the nerves, it will be found that the atonic state of the body, or whatever tends to render the brain and nervous system irritable, will generally be found the most frequent.” (c)

(c) “A Dissertation on the Treatment of Morbid Local Affections of Nerves; to which the Jacksonian Prize was adjudged by the Royal College of Surgeons, by Joseph Swan;” 1820.

I have had abundant proof of the truth of the foregoing statement. I have known several instances of slight local disease in young ladies, which disease was greatly increased by any mental excitement. One young lady at a boarding school, whose hand had been slightly injured, assured me that when the time arrived for her to furnish a composition, the pain of the hand was greatly increased. Another, with a like injury, assured me that the excitement of lectures and evening meetings so greatly increased the pain, that she was obliged, though reluctantly, to avoid them.

This tendency to nervousness, as it is often called, has greatly increased of late years in this country, and to such an extent that it is often mentioned by those not belonging to the medical profession. A writer, who is understood to be a clergyman and professor in one of the colleges in New-England, in an "Essay on the Influence of Nervous Disorders upon Religious Experience," in the Christian Spectator for 1827, observes—

"The ravages which *nervous maladies* are making at this day, in the civilized world, are appalling and immense. They are changing, and threaten still more to change, the general character of society. \* \* \* The church of God in our land deeply feels the inroads of these complaints, in prostrating the energies, and prematurely destroying the usefulness of many of her most valuable ministers. They lurk, too, around our Theological Seminaries, our Colleges, and even our preparatory schools; and there seize as their victims, many of the most devoted and talented of our youth, who had consecrated themselves to Christ and the Church."

Now all medical men agree that these diseases arise from increased impetus of blood to the brain, as has been

admirably illustrated by the celebrated Parry. Dr. Darwall remarks respecting stomach affections,—“when indigestion and its accompanying evils of nervous irritability, severely affect any individual, the brain and spinal cord, one or both, are suffering, as well as the stomach. But I wish to go farther than this point, and to regard the nervous system not as merely influenced by affections of the kind above alluded to, but as actually being the *source from which they proceed.*”

On the subject we are considering, Dr. Parry says—“Another state of disorder, which is simple depression of spirits, unconnected with any adequate afflictive cause, and usually called Hypochondriasis, is, in fact, only one effect of that morbid sensibility, which has been noted as the characteristic of the nervous temperament, and from its being a usual concomitant of the symptoms which denote that temperament, we might legitimately infer that it arose from the same cause, *excessive determination of the blood to the brain.*”(d)

*Tic-Doloureux, or Neuralgia.*—This very painful nervous affection has been wonderfully increased in this country of late years, and probably in other countries. The experienced Dr. Baillie remarks—“Tic-doloureux seems to me to have become more common of late years.” Doct. Johnson remarks—“the great number of cases of this dreadful disease which have been published of late years, prove that the complaint is on the increase, along with the host of other nervous affections. The general spread of *intellect-*

(d)“Elements of Pathology and Therapeutics,” by Caleb Hillier Parry.

*tual excitement* among all classes of society, in modern times, much deteriorate the grosser functions of the body—and this deterioration inevitably re-acts on the nervous system with a severe retaliation.”

V. The Brain and Nervous System of children and young persons, is extremely delicate, easily excited, and very liable to be injured by excitement. The brain of a new-born infant weighs about ten ounces; (e) that of an adult, generally, three pounds and a half, apothecaries' weight, frequently a little less. During childhood it is “very soft, and even almost liquid under the finger, and its different parts cannot be clearly distinguished.”(f) Still at this time it is supplied with more blood, in proportion to its size, than at any subsequent period. It then grows most rapidly, and more rapidly than any other organ: its weight is nearly doubled at the end of the first six months; and hence the nervous system, being connected with the brain, is early developed, and becomes the predominating system in youth.(g) But this great and early development very much increases the liability to disease: it gives a tendency to convulsions, and to inflammation and dropsy of the brain, and to other diseases of the nervous system, which are most common and fatal in childhood.

(e) Meckel's Anatomy, vol. ii.

(f) Bichat's General Anatomy, vol. i.

(g) This most important organ,—the local habitation of the mind in this world, undergoes but little change during middle life; but it becomes less in old age, and then the mental faculties are observed to fail. According to the researches of M. Desmoulins, the specific gravity of the brain, in persons who have passed seventy years, is from twenty to fifteen less than in adults. There are, however, some diseases which greatly waste the body but do not cause any diminution of the brain, and in these diseases the powers of the mind are retained.

Whoever will take the trouble to examine the subject, will find that such diseases, especially dropsy of the head and convulsions, have greatly increased among children in modern times. Doct. Johnson, in a Review of several late works on dropsy of the head, observes—“the present plan of education, in which the intellectual powers are prematurely exercised, may be considered as one of the causes of the more frequent recurrence of this disease.”(h) Another distinguished writer observes, “We should operate upon the tender intellect of a child, by the gentlest progression. By premature efforts to improve the powers of the intellect, the organ in which they reside is exhausted. The injurious effects arising from the folly and false vanity of parents, who are ambitious of holding forth their children as specimens of extraordinary talent, are constantly presenting themselves to our view, in a train of nervous symptoms, and of susceptibility to ordinary impressions, which frequently pave the way to decided *paroxysms of convulsions*.”(i) Similar observations have been made by many other medical writers within a few years.

The nervous system of *women* is also more excitable than that of men, and they are therefore much more likely to be injured by long continued or strong mental excitement. In them, the nervous system naturally predominates; they are endowed with quicker sensibility, and far more active imagination, than men; their emotions are more intense, and their senses alive to more delicate impressions.(j) The truth of this, the writings

(h) *Medico-Chirurgical Review*, 1826

(i) “*Practical Observations on the Convulsions of Infants*,” by John North.

(j) See “*Dictionnaire des Sciences Medicales*,” vols. XIV.—XV.—LIII.—*articles*—Femme, Fille, and Sujet d’Hygiene. Also *Histoire Naturelle de la Femme*. Par Jacq. L. Moreau (De la Sarthe.)

of physiologists, our own observation, and all history, confirms. Hence Dr. Johnson observes—"women, being far more susceptible of moral impressions than men, have in all ages been the 'chosen vessels' for enthusiasm, and the most approved subjects for delusion." Another medical writer correctly observes, they are "highly excitable, easily elevated by the contemplation of those objects which set their imagination afloat, reason loses its empire, enthusiasm and ecstasy seem to carry them beyond the limits of existence, and the agitation of their body is not less powerful than that of their mind. Of this, the great jugglers of church and state have been perfectly aware in all ages. For proofs of this assertion we need not unveil the secrets of the temple of Apollo and the Sybil, nor have recourse to the effects of the workings of the spirit on the daughters of the Romish church. The same religious pantomimes have been acted times out of number, in our own country, and with symptoms of devotion not less violent than those which shook the heathen priestess."—Edinburgh Med. and Surg. Journal, vol. 4th.(k)

From the foregoing facts and observations, the following appear to be legitimate conclusions :—

I. *All long continued or violent excitement of the mind is dangerous, because it is likely to injure the brain and nervous system.* Now if this is incorrect, then all history may be referred to, to disprove it. But on inquiry we find that all great excitements have ever

(k) The sagacious John Selden, in his "Table Talk," remarks of the conduct of the Priests of Rome,—“When the priests come into a family, they do as a man that would set fire on a house; he does not put fire to the brick wall, but thrusts it into the thatch. They work upon the women, and let the men alone.”

caused an increase of insanity, and other affections of the brain. The excitement produced among the speculators of England and France some years since by the memorable South Sea scheme—or *bubble*, as it has been called,—produced much insanity. Our Revolution and the excitement of the war increased insanity in this country; and during the first Revolution in France, cases of this disease were frightfully multiplied. In all ages and countries, insanity has prevailed most in times of great moral and mental commotion. The Crusades, and the spirit of chivalry that followed them, the Reformation of Luther, the civil and religious discords of Europe, greatly multiplied cases of insanity.<sup>(l)</sup> So true is it, that moral and mental causes excite this disease, that Esquirol says, he “could give the history of the Revolution, from the taking of the Bastille until the last appearance of Bonaparte, by that of some lunatics, whose insanity relates to the events which have distinguished this long period.”

Religious excitement, therefore, like all mental excitement, by affecting the brain, may cause insanity and other diseases. I wish, however, here, to state my belief, that pure religion—Christianity—has no such effect;—but the abuse of it has. The religion of Christ condemns that excitement, terror and fanaticism which leads to such effects; “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.” 2 Tim. i. 7.

It should, however, never be forgotten, that of all the sentiments imparted to man, the *religious*, is the most powerful. An accurate observer has remarked, that it

(l) Esquirol, Rush, Voison.

has had more influence on mankind than all their passions combined. And as each passion or feeling may be excited to excess, so as to cause mental derangement and suicide, so may the *religious feelings*, and very readily, in many instances, be so strongly excited as to produce like consequences.

To exhibit the effect of this sentiment in causing alienation of mind, in all ages of the world, I am induced to abridge from the admirable article of M. Esquirol on demonomania, in the eighth volume of the *Dictionaire des Sciences Medicales*, the following sketch. After remarking that religious melancholy had prevailed to some extent in all ages, and that the sacred books of all nations furnished examples of it, he observes :

“Then, when men abandoned the worship of the true God, and became worshippers of idols and false gods, they at first adored the stars, (Newton’s *Chronology*,) for these objects struck their senses most powerfully. Religious melancholy was therefore regarded as dependent upon the course of the planets, and its periodical returns fortified this belief. After a while, when the doctrine of spirits came to be combined with former theological ideas, nervous diseases, and especially those connected with disordered mind, being considered *sacred diseases*, were of course attributed to *spirits*. Among these maniacs some were gay, bold and daring, and said they were inspired ;—these were believed to be happy, and enjoying the friendship of God,—they presented themselves or were presented to the people, as envoys from heaven, and delivered oracles for themselves or for the priests. Other maniacs, on the contrary, were sorrowful, timid and fearful—filled with imaginary terrors. They considered themselves as damned, and they were

treated as objects deserving the wrath of heaven, and devoted to the infernal powers. Œdipus, Orestus and many other great criminals, were said to be pursued by the furies. They were however afflicted but with true religious melancholy. Anxiety, fear and great terror affected all minds—all strove to deliver themselves from expected evil, and to turn away the vengeance of heaven. Every one wished to discover in the future, that which they ought to fear or to hope for. Thus after having consulted the stars and the oracles, they invoked and interrogated the souls of the dead.

“Hence arose the science of *evocation*, and witchcraft, and other mysterious practices. Sorcery entered into and became a part of religious worship. Astrology, magic, sorcery, all *children of Fear*, so engaged and inflamed the imaginations of men, that it is not astonishing, says Pliny, that their influence continued so long, and extended to all ages, all places, and all people.

“But when Christianity appeared, it directed the minds of men to the unity of God, silenced the oracles by enlightening men, and consecrated and extended the opinion of Plato and Socrates, as to the existence of spirits. It thus produced a great revolution in the minds of men, and filled all heads with new ideas. The power of spirits over the body *was now* too greatly exaggerated, and the fear of yielding to the instigations of the devil, created universal terror. People generally believed themselves in the power of demons, consequently demonomania was at this period increased.

“From this belief arose the practice of exorcising, which prevailed in the primitive church. Recourse was had to various ceremonies to restore those *possessed* of the devil. *But they did not burn them.* In some cities,

the people held solemn festivals, in order to cure the *possessed*. All those whose minds were disordered, that were from the same country, were assembled in one church. The concourse of people from all parts was immense, and this, with the presence of the Bishop—the pomp—the appearance of solemnity—and all that was able to strongly affect the imagination, concurred to give confidence to the diseased, and occasionally to cure them. Then, every one cried out that a miracle had been wrought; and this prepared new cases and new cures for the following year.

“Afterwards, when Luther undertook to reform the church, religious conversation and discussion became common, and the points in dispute were made the subject of all preaching, and most political movements were made with reference to the religious quarrels of the times. The different partisans reciprocally menaced each other with damnation eternal. Fanaticism in all forms was revived, and to the other evils of the times was added a great increase of cases of *religious melancholy*.

“Calvin appeared soon after, and he served to increase them still more. Every where could be seen the excommunicated—the damned—and the witches. The people of course became terrified. Tribunals were created, and the devil was summoned to appear in a court of justice. Those supposed to be *possessed of the devil*, were brought to judgment—scaffolds were erected, and funeral piles were kindled. The demonomaniacs, under the name of witches and the *possessed*—double victims of the reigning errors—were burned, after having been put to the torture, to make them renounce their supposed *pacte* or league with the devil.

“In these unhappy times, such was the mania or rage to attribute every thing to the devil, that Peter d’Ancre could not comprehend how a rock, situated near a village in Asia, moved when it was touched with the fingers only, while the greatest efforts failed to remove it. Peter, I say, attributed this phenomenon to the power of a demon. I have in my possession, a *Collegium Casuale*, printed in 1500, in which the most grave diseases are considered to be works of the devil.

“But since christianity has enlightened the world, the demons have become silent; (Fontenelle, *Histoire des Oracles*;) they have ceased to struggle with men, since men have ceased to fear them. Since mankind have ceased to burn witches, the imagination has reposed, and no longer gives birth to them. In modern times, however, in France, religion has lost much of its power and influence on the ideas and conduct of men. Governments have therefore had recourse (in Europe) to other means to insure the docility of the people, and to produce obedience. These governments do not report but to themselves, and the *police* therefore becomes a safeguard for the tranquillity of the people. As its power is not only great but secret, it thus entangles the disturbers of society, and criminals, by means unknown to the people or criminals themselves. The more secret its action, the more strongly it affects the minds of the timid and those of a fearful spirit. Many people now fear the police, who, in former times, would have feared the stars and the demons. If we add to this influence, that which the police acquires in times of trouble, and civil dissensions, we shall not be astonished if in the hospitals for the insane, the demonomaniacs, or those who feared demons, have given place to those who

have fear of the *police*, and of the *prison*, and *punishments*.

“It is always cowardice, inquietude and fear which agitate these unfortunate beings; and these were the true causes of the maladies of those *possessed* of demons. There are many individuals now sent to the Lunatic Hospitals, because they have fear of the police, who, in former times would have been burned, because they feared the devil.”

“We ought to consider as a variety of demonomania, that state of some insane, who, struck with the terrors of hell, believe they are damned. They are fearful, superstitious, and imagine they have committed great crimes, the punishment of which they are not able to avoid. They are therefore desperate, and though they are not like demonomaniacs actually in the power of the devil, yet they fear damnation, and are convinced they shall go to hell. They impose on themselves mortifications more or less extravagant, in order to prevent their cruel destiny. The history of all religion presents instances of men, who, fearful of the future, submit their bodies to the most cruel and inconceivable tortures.”

This last mentioned variety of demonomania, is not unfrequent in this country. I have seen several cases within the last year. Of all kinds of insanity, it is the most deplorable, and as Esquirol and others have observed, it is very apt to lead to suicide. Many in this country believe they have committed “the unpardonable sin,” and abandon themselves to despair; while others become so on being told from the pulpit (as is frequently done by some clergymen in this region,) that if they have ever had their minds much excited on religious subjects,—or “awakened” as they express it,—and have

not encouraged these feelings, and obtained a "hope," then in all probability, their day of salvation is passed. These become religious melancholics, and not only often attempt to destroy themselves, but also their friends and dearest kindred. Pinel says—"one went away, after hearing a sermon that convinced him he was damned, and killed his children to spare them the same fate." "A young woman," says Esquirol—"after having experienced some domestic trouble, believed herself damned; and for six months she was tormented by a desire to kill her children, to save them from the torments of another life." Many similar instances might be cited from medical books, but there are few people in this part of the United States, who have not witnessed such in their own neighborhoods. I have the particulars of above *ninety cases* of suicide from religious melancholy, which have occurred in six of the northern states (the New England states and New York,) within the last twenty years, and most of them have occurred within a very few years; and also, of thirty cases in the same states, of this disease leading the unhappy sufferers to kill or to attempt to kill their children or dearest relatives, believing they should thereby ensure the future happiness of those they destroyed. I have heard of many more cases of a like character, and have seen accounts of others in the public papers, and have no doubt that if all which have occurred in the northern states within the last twenty years, could be known, together with those cases of insanity from similar causes, but not attended with the propensity to self-destruction or to the destruction of others, the great number would as much surprise and grieve the friends of humanity, as did the first published accounts of the ravages

of intemperance in this country. The difficulty, and I might say the impossibility of obtaining correct accounts of all such cases at the present time, and the impropriety of being more particular in regard to those that are known, I need not point out.

Now whoever will carefully and without prejudice examine this subject, and call to mind the immense amount of *machinery* in operation in this country, to excite the minds of men, women and children, and to keep them excited, by numerous meetings,—by exciting and alarming discourses, respecting “sinning away the day of grace,” “committing the unpardonable sin,” “dropping into hell immediately,” &c. &c.—by protracted meetings for young and old, night meetings, sunday schools, anxious and inquiry meetings, &c. &c. will not be surprised at the number of the insane being so great, *but rather that it should be so small.*

Our political excitements, which, as all know, are very violent, undoubtedly are often injurious to the health, and so are those arising from the strife for wealth: but they are so to a trifling degree in comparison with the religious excitements alluded to; and for this very obvious reason,—that *women* and *children* are not affected by the former, while they are by the latter. Besides, our political excitements are short, while numerous religious meetings, &c. keep up a constant excitement, especially among those who are most likely to be injured by great mental agitation.

Young people, especially young women, and females in general, who have not much else to greatly interest them, having become excited at these night and protracted meetings, &c. acquire a *passionate love* of the

excitement; for who does not know that a desire for mental excitement, may soon become a passion? We see it in the theatre-seeker, and in the warrior, the sailor and the gambler. We see it also in lunatic hospitals. Insanity is often periodical, or returns in paroxysms. These cause an increased flow of blood to the head, create new trains of thought, and are attended with pleasurable sensations. A madman, that was cured by the celebrated Dr. Willis, has given us the following account of his own case:—

“I always expected with impatience the accession of the paroxysms; since I enjoyed during their presence, a high degree of pleasure. They lasted ten or twelve hours. Every thing appeared easy to me. No obstacles presented themselves either in theory or practice. My memory acquired all of a sudden a singular degree of perfection. Long passages of Latin authors recurred to my mind. In general, I have great difficulty in finding rhythmical terminations; but then I could write in verse with as much facility as in prose. I was cunning, malicious, and fertile in all kinds of expedients.”

So it also happened in the Convulsionnaires de St. Me-dard, and in those who were magnetised. They experienced so great delight during their agitations, that they exceedingly desired a return of them. Mademoiselle Fourcroy, whose convulsions were very severe, expressed herself after them, as enjoying the most intense delight;—that during their continuance there was “poured into her soul rivers of delight, which filled her with a sensible but indescribable happiness.”—[*Demonst. Miracles, Mademoiselle Fourcroy.*] So it appears to

have been with St. Teresa, St. Catharine of Sienna, Wesley's converts, &c. (*m*)

(*m*) The similarity between the agitations of the Methodists, and Animal Magnetism, was noticed by Coleridge. In Southey's Life of Wesley, a work he prized very highly, he wrote—"The coincidence throughout all these Methodist cases, with those of the Magnetists, makes me wish for a solution that would apply to all."—*Table Talk*, vol. 1. In the present state of science, a full and satisfactory solution cannot perhaps be given. We know enough however, to be aware that in neither case is there any thing supernatural. The following facts and hints may aid the inquirer. The brain is composed of two very different substances. The one is of a gray or ash color, and forms the surface of the brain. When this portion is diseased, delirium and disorder of the intellectual faculties ensues. From such facts this portion has been considered the seat of the mental faculties. The other or deep seated portion is of a white color, and fibrous, and appears to be of the same nature as the nervous cords that proceed from it to all parts of the body. This portion may be greatly diseased without producing delirium or any derangement of mind, though it frequently causes Palsy and Convulsions. If the gray substance is touched or irritated, no pain or motion is perceived, but if the white portion in the medulla oblongata or spinal column is irritated, either pain or convulsive motion of the muscles is produced. Both portions of the brain receive blood from the same vessels. Therefore mental excitement causing an unusual quantity of blood to go to the brain, increases the action of the gray or ash colored part, and often adds surprising vigor to some of the mental faculties. Wesley in his Journal relates instances where great religious excitement caused unusual ability to sing, preach, &c.—Some have visions, hear strange voices, music, &c. The same occurs in Somnambulism and from Animal Magnetism. This increased rush of blood to the brain, from the excitement of the mind, often irritates the white portion of the brain also, and produces spasmodic affections, convulsions, epilepsy, catalepsy, and other singular nervous affections. Still further, under such circumstances the faculty of imitation becomes excited, (especially in young people in whom it is very active,) and acts independently of the will, and thus the sight of one in convulsions will often cause it in others, especially if their minds are much agitated, and even the recollection of convulsions will sometimes produce them. "Toutes les passions, telles que la joie, la colere, la jalousie, la terreur, le besoin de la vengeance; toutes les affections morales, telles que l'ennui, la tristesse, de meme que les travaux intellectuels trop soutenus, ou les veilles trop prolongees, peuvent donner lieu aux convulsions.

Enfin, le cerveau, qui est sans contredit, l'organe le plus eminentement doue de la faculte de reproduire les memes actes, sous la seule influence de l'imitation, peut etre tellement affecte soit de la vue actuelle des convul-

When this love of excitement is created,—besides other and worse effects,—quiet study and reading at home, especially of large and valuable works on unexciting subjects, becomes dull and irksome. Hence we find this class of persons very ignorant and superficial; though from having heard much on some of the small but exciting topics of the present time, and read some of the tracts and newspapers on the same subjects, they are apt to think themselves learned.

But the impressions which are sometimes made on children at such meetings are very dangerous. Descriptions of the terrors of hell, accounts of the devil or satan, &c., often cling to them through life, with a pernicious potency and influence. Esquirol, and other writers on insanity, relate instances where fright in early life led to insanity in after years. Well has Edgeworth remarked, “it is very dangerous to work on the young imagination with descriptions of the torments of hell. This is not the method to educate children to be pious; it is the way to render weak minds superstitious, and strong minds incredulous.”<sup>(n)</sup>

Now I would ask in concluding this subject, and in view of the facts stated, if there is no danger to be apprehended from religious excitements in this country? Is it surprising that the evils alluded to, should have re-

sions, soit du souvenir de celles qu’il a éprouvées, ou dont il a été témoin, qu’il conçoit lui-même dans les organes de la locomotion les mêmes phénomènes dont il a conservé l’impression, sans toutefois être lui-même affecté d’aucune lésion proprement dite.”—*Dictionnaire de Médecine et de Chirurgie Pratiques. Tome Cinquième.*

<sup>(n)</sup> “Essays on Professional Education,” by R. L. Edgeworth, Esq. See particularly, the Essay on Clerical Education, in which he censures the practice of saying to children—“God will punish you, my dear, if you tell a lie, or do wrong, eternally, in another world.”

sulted from the course pursued? Is it surprising that numerous instances of insanity, should be caused by these excitements? I believe no person who examines the subject will say it is.

But it should be borne in mind, that all the evils resulting to the health of people from these excitements, are not developed in acknowledged insanity; but in numerous other complaints, *and in producing a tendency to insanity, which other causes may finally develop.* Thus, persons may be greatly excited on religious subjects, and not at the time become insane; but afterwards, on a reverse of fortune, loss of friends, or ill health, be affected with religious melancholy, though the latter causes would not probably have produced it if the predisposition had not been created by the previous excitement. I have known several cases of insanity which appeared to have thus originated. But a still greater evil is to be feared, and that is, in the effect which the present excitement will have upon a succeeding generation, the offspring of excited and nervous parents.

I shall treat of this in the succeeding section, but I will not now withhold the expression of an opinion, in which I believe all medical men will agree, that those who are instrumental in thus keeping up great excitements, in the way they are kept up, especially among women and children, are inflicting unutterable misery upon their fellow creatures, and incalculable injury upon our country.

*Great Mental Excitement, particularly dangerous to females.*—I have already stated that the nervous system of females is more delicate and exciteable

than that of men, and more liable to be injured by mental excitement.

At present, however, I wish to call attention to a more important fact, though connected with the above statement. It is, that females, whose minds have been for a considerable time greatly excited, may, in consequence, transmit to their offspring a tendency to nervous disease and to insanity. Every one knows that insanity is hereditary; but this is not more true, than that lesser degrees of nervous disease are so. The children of a nervous female,—one who is often and easily excited—are generally nervous also, and easily thrown into convulsions.<sup>(m)</sup> It is also true that great mental agitation, not amounting to insanity in the mother, may entail this terrible disease upon her offspring. Esquirol says, that many women, strongly affected by the events of the Revolution, bore children whom the *slightest cause rendered insane*. He is supported by others in this opinion, that *strong mental emotion of the mother predisposes the offspring to insanity*. Dr. James Johnson observes—“the primary cause of insanity, is often stamped on the tender fabric of the body in utero, or during lactation.”

The effects of maternal excitement on the health of infants, has often, especially of late, attracted the attention of medical men. Mr. Wardrop, a distinguished surgeon of London, in a lecture on surgical operations, refers to many cases of the mental excitement of moth-

<sup>(m)</sup> Convulsions are nearly allied to insanity. Both arise from disorders of the nervous system. Van Sweiten and others have remarked, that nearly all insane persons had convulsions when young. From the bills of mortality of our large cities, it will be seen that this disease is now a very frequent and fatal one, and has greatly increased among children, of late years.

ers, producing convulsions and death of their infants, by the effect which this excitement had upon their milk. Others are destroyed in utero by great mental agitation of the mother.

Such excitement is also frequently dangerous to mothers themselves. Dr. Johnson remarks, in a review of Esquirol on Puerperal Mania—"In all ages, the influence of mental emotions on parturient females, has been duly appreciated. In ancient Rome, a crown was suspended over the door where women were confined, to intimate that the house was a sacred asylum for the time. A nearly similar custom exists at Haerlem to this day. The panic of 1814, when the allies entered France, was a prolific cause of puerperal mania. Eleven out of thirteen that entered the Salpetriere that year, were attributable to this cause. The same happened in 1815, when Napoleon recommenced the scene of warfare and desolation."

I trust I have said enough to awaken the attention of females, and particularly of mothers, to this subject ; a subject of immense importance to the welfare of themselves, their offspring, and their country.

### *Recommendations and Cautions to Clergymen.*

That the clergy, very generally, are actuated by a sincere desire to do good to their fellow men, I do not intend to question. From my own observation, I believe this is the case. But, "so essential is *knowledge* if not to virtue, at least to all the ends of virtue, that, without it, benevolence itself, when accompanied by power, may be as destructive and desolating as intentional tyranny."(o)

(o) Dr. Brown's Lectures on the Philosophy of the Human Mind.

Owing, therefore, to a want of knowledge of the brain and nervous system, and of their intimate connexion with all the operations of the mind, the clergy have often done great harm ; though I believe they have been actuated by the very best intentions—with an ardent desire to do good to their fellow men. They do not appear to have known, or to any practical extent believed, that when they strongly excite the feelings of their hearers, they excite and increase the action of one of the most delicate and important organs of the body,—one on which all the manifestations of mind are dependent,—and one exceedingly liable to be injured by excitement. I cannot believe,—when I have witnessed the anxiety which they have exhibited about the evils which intemperance in eating and drinking may entail upon the body,—they were conscious that *they themselves* were often exciting, stimulating and exposing to injury, the brain,—the very organ of the intellect, and one of extreme delicacy. I cannot believe, when they publish to the world accounts of *revivals*, and describe the mental distress, the intense sorrow, the groans and tears of their hearers at such times, and tell us that the “agony they then witnessed can never be told,”—that they are conscious of furnishing evidence of a dangerous excitement of the organic systems of their hearers, and one that may cause the most pitiable suffering for life, and be transmitted to succeeding generations.

But such is the fact. *The brain acts as really when impressions are transmitted to it, as the stomach does when aliments are received into it.* (a)

And as the natural action of the stomach is increased

(p) See Londe—*Gymnastique Medicale*,—a very valuable work.

by stimulants, so is that of the brain, by the excitement of the feelings and passions. Why then should not clergymen make anatomy and physiology a part of their study? Why should they not well understand the nature of the organ they act upon and excite, and its liability to be injured by their efforts?

I have long thought that anatomy and physiology, were studies they were bound in duty to their fellow men to pursue. But how few of them have ever paid any attention to these studies! While the libraries of the more learned among them have been filled with controversial theology of ancient and modern times, they contain little or nothing that treats of the influence of the organization upon the intellect and feelings, and of the intimate connexion between the mind and the body,---and the liability of the affections of the one, being transmitted to the other. I hope this work will serve to awaken attention to those studies among the clergy. Certainly in their attempts to improve the moral and religious condition of mankind, they should call to their aid all the assistance which the study of history, and modern science, and particularly that which physiology will afford. With these lights they will see that no good can possibly result, but on the contrary *evil* most certainly will, from every infringement of the laws of nature.\* Now it is a law of animal nature, that no organ can be long and powerfully excited and to an unusual degree, without injury.

They may also learn from the study of the science of organization and the functions of animal life, why the benevolent plans of past times, to Christianize the heath-

\* See Combe, on the Constitution of Man.

en, and particularly the Indians of this country, failed. They will see they failed not for want of the exertions of good men; for Christian missionaries went to them, and toiled and suffered and died to effect their conversion. (q) But they were unsuccessful because the physical organization of those they addressed unfitted them for the immediate and full reception and appreciation of our pure and spiritual religion.† They will also learn that no improvement equal to what the whites have made or are capable of making, is to be expected from the dark colored races, unless their physical organization is improved. From physiology, or the study of the organization and the functions of organs, we learn that it is as futile to expect the intellectual and moral endowments of the dark races of men, with the anterior and superior portions of the head depressed, to be equal to the better organized whites, as it is to expect the bodily strength of the most puny race to be equal to that of the largest.

That these unfortunate varieties are capable of improvement, however, and of great improvement, there can be no doubt, and that it is the duty of the more favored varieties to endeavour to effect it, appears to me reasonable. But we must expect their improvement to be slow.

(q) During the 17th century, greater exertions were made to civilize and christianize the Indians than have been within the last fifty years. These exertions for a while appeared successful,—thousands of Indians were to a considerable degree improved,—but not a nation or tribe have transmitted these improvements to succeeding generations.

† Can any one doubt this? Can any one believe that if the Indians, generally, of this country, had the *organ of the mind* similarly formed to the whites, they would have thus resisted all efforts to civilize and christianize them? See the able Lectures of Lawrence on the Physiology, Zoology and the Natural History of man.

But very little in this respect can be accomplished in one generation or one century : for they must be weaned from the pursuit and indulgence of mere animal gratification. Their intellectual and moral faculties must be called into action, and improved and strengthened by exercise, and this course continued for successive generations, will cause an improvement in their physical organization, and one that will be transmitted to their posterity.

With the hope of aiding the clergy in this useful and important study, I take the liberty to recommend the following works to their attention, which I think should constitute a part of every clergyman's library. I mention but a few works, and those which can easily be procured, and without much expense. Those persons who wish to prosecute the same studies farther, will be directed to other and larger works on the same subjects, by those I refer to.

1st. Horner's Special and General Anatomy, 2 vols.

2d. Dunglison's Human Physiology, 2 vols., and Blumenback's Physiology with Elliotson's notes, 1 vol.

3d. Jackson's Principles of Medicine, 1 vol., and Parry's Elements of Pathology, 1 vol.

4th. Gall, sur le fonctions de cerveau, &c. 6 vols. (a)

5th. Du Magnetisme Animal en France, par Bertrand, 1 vol. (b)

(a) I rejoice to learn that a gentleman in Boston is now translating this work, and that it will soon be published. I regard it as one of the most valuable and instructive works of this or any other age, and agree with Elliotson that it "deserves to be read, not only by every medical man, but by every moralist, naturalist, legislator and metaphysician. It is exceedingly eloquent, and full of new and splendid truths and illustrations."

(b) I know of no one work, which will furnish more useful facts and hints for clergymen, of the present day, than this.

6th. Voison on the Moral and Physical causes of Mental Maladies, &c. 1 vol.

7th. Observations on Mental Derangement, by Andrew Combe, M. D. 1 vol.

Other works on Insanity may be consulted with profit.

I also advise clergymen to peruse the works of Dr. now Sir James Johnson. In all of them will be found much useful information, conveyed in a vigorous and impressive style.

In addition to the above works, I would also recommend them to take some good Medical Journal. The "*Medico-Chirurgical Review*," conducted principally by the above named gentlemen, published quarterly in London, and re-published in New York, is one of the most valuable. The "*American Journal of the Medical Sciences*," published at Philadelphia, is another very valuable medical periodical.

By procuring and reading the volumes I have mentioned, clergymen will be enabled to learn what is now known, relating to human Physiology, and the influence of mind upon the body, and of the effect of a diseased body upon the mind and moral faculties; and by taking either of the medical journals mentioned, they will be early put in possession of the new and important truths on these subjects, which the researches of modern physiologists and pathologists furnish from time to time.

If clergymen will direct their attention to this study, I have no doubt they will see that they have often been led into error, especially of late, for want of the knowledge which the works alluded to will furnish them; and they will be enabled to avoid similar errors in future, and thus become more useful to their fellow men, in the high stations they occupy.

One good effect which will result from the pursuit of such studies by the clergy, will be the improvement of the religious newspapers and periodicals of the country, which are mostly under their control. Hitherto many of them seem to have been conducted with reference to the gratification of the taste and prejudices of the most ignorant and credulous; and I fear have contributed largely to increase and perpetuate the love of the marvellous and mysterious, among this class of people. Thus we find them to contain surprising accounts of the conversion of infant children, of remarkable effects from reading a tract;—of the fulfilment of the dreams of pious people; immediate answers to prayers, and many other accounts far more wonderful. (n) Long accounts of nervous diseases are published and attributed to the *influence of the Holy Spirit*. Instances of this kind in religious newspapers of the present day are innumerable. I will refer but to one or two. The following account of occurrences at a camp-meeting at Asbury, Tennessee, is from the *West. Methodist*, but has been copied into other religious newspapers. I take it from the *New York Evangelist*, conducted by the Rev. Joshua Leavitt, of Sept. 20th, 1834.

“It was no longer a question with the sinner whether he should come to the altar or not; he was arrested where he stood; and some fell as dead men; one in

(c) These objections apply to some of the *Tracts* published by the *American Tract Society*. Some of them contain statements, that if true of themselves,—yet the inference which many of their readers will draw from them, and which the publishers probably intended they should draw, are *not true*. Many of the pictures on them are disgraceful—they are much of a piece with measures which the Roman Catholics have resorted to, to make impressions on weak minds. This is not the way that christianity should be taught in an enlightened age. See the *Tracts* on “*Sabbath Occupations*,” and “*Fashionable Amusements*,” Nos. 73 and 116.

particular, suddenly while standing, fell all along upon the ground as if dead: he was cold and stiff as if in death. A lady sitting in her chair was suddenly turned into a marble-like, cold and motionless statue; her eyes were fixed in her head, and many thought her to be dying; but all these were only dying unto sin, for soon they were made alive unto God."

If the reader will turn to almost any *Treatise on Diseases*, he will see that these were attacks of *Catalepsy*, which consists in a sudden and temporary suspension of consciousness and volition—the body remaining in the precise position it was when the attack came on, the eyes and countenance fixed and motionless. The attack of this disease varies from a few minutes to a much longer time; and often passes off suddenly, when the patient is instantly restored to the full possession of all his faculties.

The following is from the *Norfolk Beacon*, of Aug. 19, 1824. This has also been copied into other religious papers without any doubt expressed as to its being produced "by the Spirit of God." I take it from *Zion's Herald*.

*"A singular display of the goodness and power of Almighty God, at a Camp-Meeting held at Tangier Island.*

"Miss Narcissa Crippin, a highly respectable young lady, 19 years of age, and a zealous christian, was, on the evening of the 15th instant, so operated upon by the Spirit of God, that her face became too bright and shining for mortal eyes to gaze upon, without producing the most awful feelings to the beholders. It resembled the reflection of the sun upon a bright cloud. The appearance of her face for the space of forty minutes was

truly angelic, during which time she was silent, after which she spoke and expressed her happy and heavenly feelings, when her dazzling countenance gradually faded, and her face resumed its natural appearance. The writer of this paragraph was an eye witness of the circumstance above stated—such a sight he never expected to behold with mortal eyes, and to give a true description of which would be beyond the ability of mortal man. While she remained in the situation above described, she was seen by more than two hundred persons, a few of whom have subscribed their names hereto.

WM. LEE, (Rev.)

WM. E. WISE,

JOHN BAYLY.

Every one at all conversant with nervous diseases, or who has read any thing on the subject, will recognize nothing in the above account, but the details of a *nervous affection*. But it is grievous to see such published in religious newspapers, and at the present age attributed to the influence of the Holy Spirit. The works of the Papists of past times abound with similar marvellous accounts. Their saints were often thus affected. (a)

(a) The similarity of some of the small periodicals published by the Roman Catholics, especially those conducted by the Jesuits; and many of the orthodox newspapers of this country, is very striking. Both contain marvellous or miraculous accounts of the "special" agency of God in the affairs of men,—both urge their readers to greater devotion, to more frequent attendance at church, and to trifling ritual observances, and both denounce in severe terms, balls, parties, theatres, &c. and those who frequent them. I made a memorandum of this similarity several years since, on reading a small periodical published in Paris in the reign of Charles X. called the *Conservateur* of the Restoration and of the King, and *hommes de bien*.

Lady Morgan alludes to the fact of the Roman Catholic clergy preaching against balls from the pulpit, and punishing attendance on them at the confessional. In truth they have always been as much opposed to what are called *fashionable amusements* as any of the rigidly pious of any other sect.

In the life of M. Magdalen of Pazzi, who was canonised April 28th, 1669, it is stated that, "The spirit of God threw her upon the ground in an ecstasy, *when her countenance was shining like that of an incarnate Seraphim,*" &c.

As I have said, if clergymen and the conductors of religious newspapers, would but pay a little attention to the studies I have mentioned, they would not insult hereafter the understanding of their more intelligent hearers and readers, and delude the ignorant and credulous with such like circumstances, and attribute them to the special influence of the Almighty. On the contrary they would rebuke those who offered such for publication, and then such occurrences would cease.

I ought to notice in connexion with this subject, the very slight proof on which the conductors of religious newspapers, send forth to the world extravagant and marvellous accounts respecting revivals of religion and the *special effects* of the Holy Spirit. On the authority of a single letter, or the verbal account of a traveller, they give credit and circulation to statements that are of themselves very incredible, statements that no intelligent person can, or ought to believe, unless supported by an immensity of testimony. The illustrious Laplace, and there can be no higher authority on such a subject, observes, "the more extraordinary the facts professed to have been witnessed, the greater is the probability that

This we may learn from the immortal *Tartuffe* of Moliere. Madame Pernelle expressed what has been repeated by the extremely devout from that time to the present.

"Ces visites, ces bals, ces conversations,  
Sont du malin esprit toutes inventions.  
La, jamais ou n'entend de pieuses paroles."

*Le Tartuffe, Act 1, Scene 1.*

the witnesses were mistaken or intended to deceive. But that which diminishes the faith of enlightened men often increases that of the ignorant, who are disposed to believe in marvellous occurrences. An absurd statement admitted unanimously in the age it was first promulgated, is in the ages following, only regarded as a new proof of the great influence of general opinion, on even the best minds. Thus Racine and Pascal stated that a young man who had been afflicted for three years and a half with a fistula Lachrymalis, was cured *miraculously*, after having touched his eye with a relic that was said to be a thorn of the crown of our Saviour." (L'essai philosophique sur le calcul des probabilités.) I need not remark how entirely this advice is disregarded by the conductors of many religious periodicals. The reader has only to examine a few of them to see that the *marvellous accounts* of the ignorant are given to the public as undoubted truth, without any other proof than their own statement. Even in many of the standard works on religious subjects, remarks are hazarded that show great carelessness if not great error. How immense ought to be the testimony to enable an intelligent person to believe things stated by Wesley, Whitfield, Seward, and others. Or to credit the statements of Mr. Finney, especially in his Lecture on the prayer of faith. I have already alluded to careless statements made by Dr. Sprague in his work on Revivals. Another in point, is that the "result of revivals is to elevate the intellectual condition of man." "I should expect," says he, "with great confidence, that of two individuals, one of whom had been a sharer in the blessed effects of a revival, and the other was a stranger to the power of religion, other things being equal, the former would be

*far more* successful in acquiring any branch of useful knowledge than the latter."

That excitement of mind on any subject awakens the intellect, no one will deny. But this cannot be all that Dr. S. intends to be understood from his statement, and yet we presume it is all that he has any facts to substantiate. But if his remark is true to any further extent, it could easily be proved by reference to individuals who have been *sharers in revivals*. According to my observation, his remark will not be supported by this method of proof. Again, if it is true, we should find the inhabitants of the town of Lee in Massachusetts, and generally of Berkshire county, very intellectual. According to the testimony of Dr. Hyde's letter appended to Sprague on Revivals, the town of Lee had been very often "refreshed by the presence of the Lord," and was frequently "favored with *special* tokens of God's presence," that there the "spirit of God came down upon the people like a rushing mighty wind," &c. Now has the result been such as we should expect from Dr. Sprague's statement? Let Dr. Sprague inquire and answer. The following facts show a very different result. Just before the death of Dr. Hyde, what are called *new measures* to promote revivals were introduced into his vicinity. His people who had so often been favored with what Drs. Hyde and Sprague call *genuine* revivals of religion, and whom we should suppose would be stable minded and cautious, and not easily misled, became according to Dr. Hyde's own statement, suddenly fanatical. "I never witnessed," said he, "a state of feeling in the church so ominous of evil as at present." "I was never more solicitous for my people." "I never before witnessed such infatuation." "For a time *I had to*

*stand alone*; but *some of the people* are coming to their senses." (See Memoirs of Dr. H.)

Poor man! truly does the author of the "portrait of new measures," &c. say that Dr. H. "fell in the midst of the battle, and died half a martyr," among his own people. But he lived to see the ravages of a fire which he had largely though unwittingly contributed to kindle. He had aided in creating the combustible material, which at length blazed up, and astonished and frightened him. He had taught his people and the people in his vicinity, to look and pray for *special manifestations* from on high; he had told them that the special presence of the Holy Spirit was *evinced* by outward signs, and that it was to be expected "like a rushing mighty wind," &c. (See his letter appended to Sprague on Revivals.) Then at length occurred just what has ever occurred, and ever will, when people are thus instructed and excited. They become in this manner prepared to join in any fanatical project urged upon them. Let Dr. Sprague and his coadjutors ponder on these things, and particularly on the present religious state of Berkshire county. A county distinguished during the last half century, for what *they* call *genuine* revivals, but now overrun, churches broken up, clergymen dismissed and dissensions created, by what they please to denominate *spurious* revivals. Surely a very little reflection will show them the natural and necessary connexion between the former and the latter.

It must be evident to observing clergymen themselves, that many intelligent, reflecting and good men, are beginning to look upon the modern system of revivals of religion, and the measures connected with them,—protracted meetings, &c. and the disputes of clergymen of

the same sect, respecting which are genuine and useful revivals, and which are spurious and dangerous,—what measures are proper, and what improper, &c. with considerable anxiety and alarm. But such is the general reverence and respect for sacred things, that evils connected with them are long seen and often long felt, before individuals or communities are moved to complain. This all religious history teaches. I beg therefore of clergymen to beware before it is too late ; for it always happens when the abuses connected with religion become great and intolerable, many people, and sometimes the mass of them, attribute the evils they see to religion itself, and then arises general infidelity. Thus Dr. Green of Princeton, observes of the religious excitement in Kentucky, which I have already noticed—“Kentucky has not yet fully recovered from the injury which was done to her religious interests at this memorable period. It was followed by an open avowal and general prevalence of infidel principles, with all their mournful consequences, beyond any thing that had previously appeared.”

I know that some will exclaim, that if we give up the now prevalent doctrine of the *special* and *occasional outpourings* of the Holy Spirit, as described by modern revivalists, it will be giving up the Bible. To such I say, examine the Bible, and you will see that it sanctions no such inference. Reflect also, that a belief in witchcraft was not long since deemed by wise and good men, an essential part of every good Christian's faith ! In Archbishop Cranmer's articles of visitation, 1549, is this, “*Item.* You shall inquire ; whether you know of any that use charms, sorcery, enchantments, witchcraft, soothsaying, or any like craft invented by the

Devil." (Sparr. Coll. of Art.) Not long since those who disbelieved in witchcraft, and made known their disbelief, were considered heretical, and deemed bad or very ignorant persons. The learned and pious Dr. Moore denounced all such, and called them "Hag-advocates." (See Historical Essay concerning Witchcraft, by Francis Hutchison, D. D., London, 1720.) Such good men as Baxter, Calamy and Mather, believed in witches, and advocated their apprehension and punishment by death. How much now do we all regret their shocking delusion on this subject. How much is it to be regretted that they had not more knowledge, and thus been kept from lending their aid to the shedding of much innocent blood. Yet even in Wesley's time, this belief in witchcraft prevailed to some extent. He himself observes, in his Journal for 1768, "Most of the men of learning in Europe, have given up all accounts of witches and apparitions, as mere old wive's fables. I am sorry for it. They well know that the giving up witchcraft is, in effect, giving up the bible." Undoubtedly Wesley was mistaken in supposing a belief in witchcraft, to be an essential part of a Christian's faith; but not more so than those are, who think it essential to believe that the effects witnessed in modern revivals are produced by the *special outpouring of the Spirit of God*.

## CHAPTER VIII.

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### UTILITY OF THE SABBATH, AND OF THE IMPORTANCE OF CULTIVATING DEVOTIONAL FEELINGS.

It has often been remarked, especially by medical men, that if there had been no Divine command respecting the seventh day, it would be very useful to mankind to observe it as a day of rest. Of this I have no doubt. But in this section, I propose to examine the subject a little further, and learn what the Divine command is, respecting it, and then make a few remarks upon the proper and improper observance of it, as regards health.

The time when the Sabbath was instituted, is yet an unsettled point ; some suppose at the beginning of the world, and that the patriarchs observed it, though there is no proof furnished by the Old Testament that they did so, before Moses. Philo, whom we have already quoted, says—"the Sabbath is common to the whole world," and Josephus observes—"there is no city, Greek or barbarian, or any nation, where it is not known as a religious observance." The oldest Greek poets allude to it ; and it is believed that the Pagans have religiously revered the seventh day, or at least they preserved the memory of such a day.

But generally, the Sabbath is believed to have been first instituted by the command of the Almighty to the Hebrews, soon after they came out of Egypt, or about 2500 years after the creation of the world. The precept or law of the Sabbath usually referred to, is that in Exodus, xx. 8—11., and is as follows :—

“Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work ; but the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God : *in it* thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates : For *in* six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day : wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath-day, and hallowed it.”

From this we do not learn precisely *why* it was instituted. To be sure, it is said because the Lord rested the seventh day, after creating the world ; but we can hardly understand why man should rest one day, and then renew his labor, on this account.

But in the twenty-third chapter of Exodus, the sabbath is again alluded to ; and here I think we learn *why* it was appointed, and how it ought to be observed. Here in the 12th verse, it is stated :—“Six days thou shalt do thy work, and on the seventh day thou shalt rest : *that thine ox and thine ass may rest, and the son of thy handmaid, and the stranger, may be refreshed.*”

From this, we infer that it was established for the good of man, and to afford rest to servants or slaves, and beasts. To me, this is a sufficient reason for the Divine appointment of this institution, for I have no doubt that both men and beasts are more healthy, and

are able to accomplish more labor, from the observance of every seventh day, as a day of rest, than they otherwise would be. This view of the subject, places it in accordance with other parts of the Mosaic regulations. It is thus seen to form but a portion of that *wise medical police* established by Moses, in which we see constant regard was had to the improvement and continuance of the health of the people.

I am aware, however, that some say that this Jewish sabbath is done away with, and ought not to be kept. Mr. Coleridge, in his "Table Talk," speaking of the Christian sabbath, says—"To confound it with the Jewish sabbath, or to rest its observance upon the fourth commandment, is in my judgment heretical, and would so have been considered in the primitive church." The renowned Luther was of the same opinion, and on this subject observes,—“Keep the sabbath holy for its use sake, both to body and soul! But if any where the day is made holy for the mere day's sake,—if any where any one sets up its observance upon a Jewish foundation, then I order you to work on it, to ride on it, to dance on it, to feast on it—to do any thing that shall reprove this encroachment on the Christian spirit and liberty.”

But if the Divine command given in the Old Testament, on this subject, does not oblige us to keep this day, then we have none whatever. Christ has not given us any. Still I think he must have approved of it as a day of rest, for he found such an institution to exist, and he said nothing against it in this respect, though he condemned the strict Jewish observance of it. When charged with not observing it himself, he replied that "it was lawful to do well on the sabbath days." But it should

be borne in mind, that he constantly taught that it was necessary to do well on all days. It is pitiful to see the efforts of some men to belittle this subject, and misunderstand and misrepresent the Christian duty in relation to the sabbath, and endeavour to make mankind believe that it is an offence against God to walk, ride, visit friends, or even to abstain from hearing sermons on that day. They seem not to be able to comprehend the difference between the teachings of Moses and Christ. While the former established rites and ceremonies, the latter sought only to create in man the sincere love of his Creator and of his fellow men. The high aim of Christ was to make men *do well* on all days, not on one particular day---to establish the love of God and man in the heart of man, not to establish a particular form of worship. Such was the great purpose of our Saviour---and thus it happened that the early Christians abandoned the Jewish sabbath, and established another devoted to rest, enjoyment, and deeds of charity and love.

I therefore shall consider it as a day, very properly set apart for the rest of man and beast ; and take the liberty to make a few remarks upon what I deem to be the proper and the improper observance of this day.

First,---I consider that it ought to be a day of rest from accustomed labor, whether that labor be of body or mind. On that day, the ox should be unyoked, and the laborer in the field and the workshop should cease from toil, and the week day student cease from his studies. I regard the Sunday school system as very objectionable in many places, on this account. I know from my own observation and inquiry in Manchester, and other large towns in England, that Sunday schools

*there*, are among the best institutions ever devised ; (a) and I have no doubt they are of great service in many towns and sections of this country. I hope that in such places, Sunday schools will be continued ; and that whenever children cannot attend school on other days in the week, that increased efforts will be made to have them instructed on Sunday. But I cannot believe that those children who attend school during the week, and church on Sunday, should also *attend school on that day*. I know not of any good reason for it, nor of any evidence that such a course has been serviceable to children. I believe also that it is as unscriptural, and as much in violation of the commandment to keep the sabbath day, as any other labor is. I also believe it will ultimately have a bad moral and religious effect, as well as an injurious effect upon the intellect and health of those children who are thus forced to study every day. On this subject I am confident the welfare of the rising generation demands a reform ; and beg the attention of unprejudiced and religious men to the consideration of it.

Secondly,---The unnecessary labor of horses on the sabbath, is very objectionable. I have already alluded to the great abuse of them on the sabbath, especially in

(a) I am aware that many distinguished medical men of England, among whom were Blundell, Bell, Brodie, Elliotson, Guthrie, Green, Travers, &c. testified before a committee of Parliament, on the *Factories regulation bill*, that it was an injury to the health of children, who had worked hard all the week in factories, to attend school on the sabbath ; and gave it as their opinion that Sunday schools, under such circumstances, ought not to be encouraged. I know this objection is well founded, yet so great a blessing is even a little learning, that I cannot advise the abandonment of Sunday schools in manufacturing towns, though I wish the week day labor might be diminished. But the testimony of these medical men may well apply to show the impropriety of Sunday schools for those who attend school all the other days of the week.

cold weather. I know of no command or even permission in the bible, for such treatment of beasts of burden ; and surely reason will not justify it. While I admit that it is very desirable that people should assemble for public worship, at least once every sabbath, I do not admit that there is any command so to do, that justifies man in breaking the express command of God to let their "cattle rest," and thus depriving them of a right given to them by their and our creator, and preventing them from enjoying the rest essential to their welfare.

Many people seem to have forgotten the command to *rest* on that day, and construed it to mean assembling and hearing sermons all day. But surely this is incorrect. Besides, books are now so numerous that men may acquire information on any subject, full as well at home, as they can by attending on discourses at church. Though, as I have said, I think the day, or a part of it, ought to be consecrated to devotion, and this leads me to remark,

*On the importance of cultivating devotional feelings.*—As I have said, man appears to be a religious being. He is naturally disposed to devotion, for it is a want of his nature. In all ages and in all climes, he has resorted to some kind of religious worship, and when its forms are not such as his reason repels, he not only seeks it, but is benefitted by it.

There are however times in the history of mankind, when from various causes, and particularly from the efforts of the priesthood to make religious notions stationary, that religious forms linger behind the intelligence of the times ; and then the people in a degree forsake religious worship. Then occurs what is called a decay of the na-

tional religion, a decay which has always, as in Greece, been accompanied by that of the nation.

The entire disregard of religion and religious worship, or in other words a want of reverence for superior and invisible beings, leads to a disregard of other authority. Men ceasing to reverence their Creator, cease to reverence every thing else, rulers, magistrates, and even truth and the dictates of conscience.

And here I take the liberty to inquire if there is not in this country some danger of increasing this irreligious or irreverent tendency, and even by the very methods which are resorted to by some religious sects to effect a different result. Our government and democratic institutions, though they do not encourage this tendency, do nothing towards fostering other feelings of reverence, which are allied to religious feelings. This I do not mention as a fault of our institutions, but as a circumstance worthy of attention. In this country, the political are sometimes stronger than the religious feelings. Thus we occasionally see when party spirit runs very high, (though I admit it is only at such times that the *spirit of sect* yields,) the latter succumb, and men are selected as candidates for office, and advocated by all religious sects, without any regard to their religious or irreligious opinions. But this tendency to consider the religious character of high magistrates of no consequence, may have, very bad effects. In my opinion it is very essential to our national welfare, that this tendency should be guarded against, and that pains should be taken to cultivate sentiments of veneration for sacred things; for truth, honesty, and perfect uprightness. But how is this to be accomplished? I believe it cannot be accomplished by the course which many religious

sects are now pursuing,—by running counter to the science and intelligence of the times, by having recourse to measures, avowedly for the benevolent purpose of converting men, women, and children, that are revolting to enlightened reason, injurious to the health of body and mind, and which produce contention and wrangling among religious sects and the members of the same sect. Neither is it to be done by setting up a standard of religious character, founded on certain *emotions and feelings*, or on the manifestation of some one or two, good traits of character or conduct, such as the expression of strong and ardent devotional feelings, or professions of extreme desire for the conversion of the world,—traits of character that the hypocrite and those for whose interest it is, can readily manifest. Above all it is not to be accomplished by denouncing all those as irreligious, who exhibit less of this *verbal piety*--who do not profess to have experienced any *supernatural emotions*, but who manifest through life other virtues equally essential to the christian, more difficult to counterfeit, and which might as well be referred to, as evidence of being governed by christian principles.(a)

But I think it may be accomplished by steadily and rationally inculcating the essential and benevolent views

(a) "Preach macerations, fanaticism, obstinacy, mortifications, mysteries, &c. and the crowd will follow you, but demand a severe morality of action, and you will be abandoned. It costs much more to be virtuous than devout."—Gall.

So exceedingly pure and severe is the morality of the religion of Christ, that it not only keeps far in "advance of every improved stage of society," but almost forces us to believe that mankind are not even in their present improved state, capable of living fully up to its requirements; and we are tempted to exclaim as did the celebrated Linacre on reading the 5th, 6th, and 7th chapters of Matthew, "either this is not the Gospel, or we are not christians."

of Christ. By constantly urging upon men christian morality. By considering a good life and good works, as the only evidence of "faith in Christ," works of "kindness, charity, mercy and public spirit ; not holy-day keeping, sermon reading or hearing ; performing church ceremonies or making long prayers, filled with flatteries and compliments despised even by wise men, and much less being capable of pleasing the Deity."(b) Men should be taught to venerate the virtues inculcated by our Saviour,—to worship if I may so express myself, truth, love, charity, self-denial, &c., virtues of which he was the living personification. This appears to me, to have been the kind of worship desired by the founder of our religion ; for Christ himself was totally devoid of selfishness, or love of domination. He did not desire that men should assemble in vast numbers, and prostrate themselves before him and chant his praise ; but he required them to "love their neighbors as themselves," and this he pronounced to be "fulfilling the whole law." He also assured mankind, that wherever "two or three were met together in his name, he would be in the midst of them." It appears to me that much of modern sermonising is poorly calculated to promote calm and rational feelings of devotion, or to lead men to appreciate the highest excellencies of the Gospel of Christ. It may serve to excite perhaps a love of church going, but rather to hear the peculiar and loved notions of a sect set forth and illustrated, or to hear other sects, or those they please to consider sinners, denounced, or to listen to some of the puerile but exciting topics that are

(b) B. Franklin.

agitating the clergy of the day,<sup>(c)</sup> than to hear the truths of the gospel inculcated; truths such as Christ first preached to men on the mount. This subject is intimately connected with the one I am treating; as the disposition and temperament of the preacher, and the character of his preaching, has an influence not only upon the mental peace and comfort of the inhabitants of the town where he officiates, but also upon their health and physical welfare. So great is this influence, and so beneficial it may be, that much inquiry should be made respecting the temperament and disposition of a clergyman, before he is selected as the religious teacher of a people. Too often one is selected in consequence of some one trait of character or mark of ability; because he can preach an eloquent discourse, or because he exhibits very ardent devotional feelings, &c. But however excellent such powers or feelings may be, they are not sufficient to make a man, a good clergyman for a town. A man may exhibit, and actually have the most ardent religious feelings, (and this is often the case,) and but very few other excellencies of character; and though full of professed zeal for what he calls the cause of Christ, is, (without being a hypocrite,) far from being a good and useful citizen. While another who makes much less pretension to strong religious feelings, (and in whom, in fact, they are less ardent,) may possess many more excellencies of character, and be a far more useful man. In truth, ardent religious feeling is a very

(c) I need but refer to one that is now exciting much attention, and that is whether at the last supper with his disciples, Christ used fermented wine or the unfermented juice of grapes,—a question about as important and as difficult to settle, as that which agitated the clergy in the 12th and 13th centuries,—“whether Christ ascended to heaven with his clothes on.”

uncertain and unsafe test of a man's fitness for the clerical office;—like all our feelings, it needs the aid and guidance of benevolence and enlightened reason to be very beneficial to mankind. Preachers, like other men, in consequence of their organization, model without knowing it, the character of their heavenly Father after their own.(e) Hence we find one clergyman, who apparently delights to dwell on the terrors of the world to come, and on the power and vengeance of the Almighty, and thus plainly manifests his own disposition; while another, more amiable and mild, will love to speak of the merciful character of the Deity, whom he will represent as a father who welcomes without reproaches the returning prodigal;—as a shepherd who seeks, and in a kindly voice, calls back the wandering sheep.

The former constitute the great class of *denouncing preachers* in this country. They condemn their hearers or great portions of them,—those they call sinners, and often in coarse and vulgar terms.(f) Such men

(e) Voison, who thus accounts for the difference in the teachings of noted divines—as Fenelon and Bossuet, who at the court of Louis XIV. “did not appear to invoke the same Deity.”

(f) The Rev. Drs. Reed and Mattheson of England, in their “Narrative of the visit to the American churches,” notice the prevalence of this kind of preaching in this country. Speaking of the *denouncing clergymen*, they say, “they address the sinner, *under the name of fidelity*, in harsh, severe and bitter terms; and are covetous either of submission or opposition.” These gentlemen profess to have given much attention to *revivals of religion* in this country, but their account of them is very confused, as the reader will see by referring to their “Narrative.” They talk of “approved revivals,” which they think are the *genuine*, but approved by whom? They are incorrect in many particulars. They appear to consider “protracted meetings” and “anxious seats,” peculiar to the *new measure* clergy, and intimate that they are disapproved of, by the old measure party. But in fact protracted meetings have been approved of and resorted to, by both parties: and so have *anxious seats*; or what amounts to the same thing; the anxious have been

though often popular with their party or sect, are never so with *great masses of men*, and therefore never accomplish any *very great* good. Some people however seem to acquire a relish for this kind of denunciatory and dogmatical preaching, and perhaps mistake the love of hearing their own sectarian views inculcated, and those of opponents denounced, for a love of christianity itself. In fact, the love of sect, has become a great evil in our country. It is a great and almost insurmountable difficulty, in the way of free, and fair inquiry for truth. "The greatest evil perhaps," says Condorcet "which can be done to truth, is to force those who love it, to form a sect."

Such preachers appear to me, to mistake the best method of teaching Christianity: or they seem not to know, what the present age requires of them, as religious instructors. They seem not to observe, that the

requested to intimate it, by some bodily movement. Thus at a protracted meeting in this vicinity, conducted by clergymen supposed to be opposed to the *new measures*, the anxious were requested to lean forward their heads and rest them for a time upon the seat before them. This is veritably the same thing as anxious seats, and no one who approves of the one can consistently condemn the other. The measures are the same in principle, and the same result is expected from both. Both appear to be attempts to make the contagiousness of bodily movements,—mere automatic sympathy, aid in producing religious excitement, &c.

The difference in fact between the *new* and *old* measure clergy, is very unimportant. For instance, the latter condemn the former, for early admitting to the communion, those supposed to be converted. But the latter advise to a course which must lead to the evils, if there are any, that attend the former course. They advise the newly converted to be constantly *watched, examined and instructed*, by the clergymen until they are admitted, in order they say to *test the sincerity of their hope*. But is this a philosophical way? would it not be the way to perpetuate any delusion? Why not follow the advice of Gamaliel, and "let them alone; for if this work be of men, it will come to nought; but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it." Acts v. 38, 39.

present age demands *explanation*, not *dogmatism*: that christianity is very properly yielding to the spirit of the age, and has become philosophical. Heretofore when the great mass of mankind received it, and believed it, without examination, then it was dogmatical, imperious and immutable; but now like all other subjects it is submitting itself, and it must submit itself to discussion, analysis and examination. But it is not, therefore, as many would have us believe, losing its divine character, or ceasing to be beneficial to mankind, but on the contrary is becoming more so, by thus harmonising with the increased intelligence of the times. (b)

I am of opinion, as I have said, that these *denouncing* preachers do but little good in community, and often much harm. A preacher of a different and milder character, though he may not be so popular with a sect, or with a few, is far better for the mental peace and physical comfort of the inhabitants of a town, and will be more likely to promote their moral and religious welfare. One who seeks not "to hold dominion over the faith of his hearers, but to be a helper of their joy." 2. Cor. i. 24. One who ever keeps in mind the *Democratic spirit of the Gospel*,† and therefore views all men as equal, and strives to make himself acceptable and useful, not merely to a select few, that he may deem more moral or respectable, but to all. One who seeks to reclaim the vicious, not wholly by denunciation, but by frequent deeds and words of kindness and love.

Such a clergyman is a great blessing to a town. He becomes a loved and influential man. By his regular and orderly inculcation of the truths of the gospel, the

(b) Michelet, Introduction l'Histoire Universelle.

† "Christianity is the root of all Democracy."—*Novalis*.

people in his vicinity become fond of attending the church on the sabbath, and acquire a love and habit of attending ; while a denunciatory preacher awakens opposition, creates bad feelings, and drives many from the church forever.\* During the ministry of such a clergyman, there may not be any great and marvellous religious excitements, yet proper devotional feelings are developed and encouraged, and are made beneficial to the health of the people, because a natural want—the *love of devotion*, is thus gratified. And here it is very important to consider that it is scarcely more true, that great and violent religious excitements, like all others, are injurious to health, than that the entire neglect of devotion and religious duties are so. History, however, teaches us, that the entire neglect of devotion never occurs except from the fault of religious instructors. Thus it happens whenever religious doctrines are inculcated that are absurd, and not in accordance with the known truths of the age, then the people confound these absurd doctrines with religion itself, and for a while, renounce both. Then, when let loose from all religious restraints—from all fear of superior beings, and all respect for their authority, like a helmless vessel tossed by the waves, they are driven by their passions into excesses that produce disease and death.

\* I fear that this kind of dogmatical and denunciatory preaching has had a bad effect in this State. How else can we account for the fact, that in many towns which, ever since their first settlement, have been supplied with orthodox Calvinistic preachers, “the churches are run down,”—and that but very few men of the town are members of any church. The fact is certain,—what then is the cause ? It is not owing to the influence of other, and what these preachers consider heretical sects ; for they have had the field to themselves. Has there not been a wrong method adopted in the professed attempts to preach the Gospel to the people ? The inquiry is an important one.

Esquirol has shown that the abandonment of religion, and the decay of religious influence in France, increased insanity. He observes—"The changes which have taken place in France during the last thirty years, in our manners and customs, have produced more instances of madness than all our political calamities. We have exchanged our ancient customs and fixed habits, our old and established sentiments and opinions, for speculative theories and dangerous innovations. Religion now only comes forward as a formal usage in the solemn transactions of life : it no longer affords its consolations to the afflicted, or hope to the desponding. *Morality, founded on religion*, is no longer the guide of reason in the narrow and difficult path of life. A cold egotism has dried up all the sources of sentiment ; there no longer exist domestic affections, respect, attachment, authority, or reciprocal dependencies ; every one lives for himself ; none are anxious to form those wise and salutary provisions, which ought to connect the present age with those which are destined to follow it."\*

Let me, therefore, urge the clergy of this country to be exceedingly careful of connecting absurd measures and doctrines with religious duties, for fear that in time, they will disgust the great mass of the people, and lead them to attribute these absurdities to religion itself ; and thus cause to come upon the country the very evils they most dread,—even the general decay of religious feeling and worship.

With these observations, I conclude the volume, and send it forth to the public, hoping and believing it will be timely and serviceable. It would be, at least, affecta-

\* Dictionnaire des Sciences Medicales. Vol. 16, Art. Folie.

tion in me, to pretend that I expect it to receive the approbation of all. That it will generally be condemned, however, I cannot believe, as it is not probable that the opinions I have advanced, respecting the danger to be apprehended from *Religious Excitements*, should be peculiar to myself. But on this subject let me not be misunderstood; let me not be understood to say, that the diseases I have alluded to, are generally caused by these excitements. All I wish to have the reader understand, is, that they are very frequently caused by mental excitement, and that by religious excitement becoming excessive and general, especially among women and children, there is vast danger of increasing them.

That the intelligent members of the medical profession will approve of the medical doctrines I have advanced, I can have no doubt. Already many of them have expressed themselves in strong language upon this subject. I refer particularly to "Remarks on Cowper," by M. Madden, in his excellent work on the "Infirmities of men of genius." In a late Review of this work, in the most celebrated Medical Journal in the world,\* it is stated in reference to medical men who do not guard against producing the disease, (religious monomania,) that afflicted Cowper; "there are, in our own profession, an increasing number of "psalm singers," who would zealously pursue the same course of conduct which destroyed Cowper! Muddle-pated, narrow-minded, bigotted, enthusiastic,—perhaps hypocritical physicians, who are, for ever, thrusting their religious dogmas into the minds of their patients, while drenching their bodies with physic! We have no patience with

\* *Medico-Chirurgical Review*, by Sir James Johnson, M. D.

such personages. Those who are sincere are fools—those who are not so are rogues.”

Dr. Caldwell, of this country, has also remarked upon this subject, in a late work. After alluding to the injury resulting from the “ embittered war of party politics,” and its tendency to produce insanity, he observes :—

“ Of party religion, nearly the same is true. Sectarian embroilment, battle, and intrigue are constant, furious and vengeful. Sometimes the strife is about a doctrinal tenet, at other times about a formal rite or ceremony, and again for the achievement of power and influence—one sect struggling for the mastery over the rest—at least to outstrip them in schemes of ambition. Nor must I forget the fervid and unceasing labors of the pastor and preacher for the conversion and edification of his flock, and the wild and convulsive emotion he often produces in their minds. In no other nation are these several forms of excitement half so high and agitating as in the United States. A similar condition of things exists in the congregation of the celebrated Irving, of London, many of whose hearers are occasionally deranged.”\*

Other distinguished physicians have advanced similar views. Indeed, it would be grievous to me to find I had expressed opinions not in accordance with those of other medical men, or that I had, even unintentionally, misstated or misapplied, some of the great truths of my profession. But innumerable facts, derived from many years of careful observation and enquiry ; very many physiological and pathological truths, must be obliterated from my memory, before I can be deprived of the consciousness of having collected and presented, (though

\* Thoughts on Physical Education, p. 91.

in a very imperfect manner,) important and timely considerations for my countrymen. I submit them, however, to the decision of the public ; with the consolatory reflection, that, even if they are erroneous, they are presented in an age when "reason being left free to combat error," the latter cannot have very great or permanently evil effects.

The following is a brief summary of some of the opinions I have endeavored to establish :

First. The religious sentiment is innate in man ; but as it often acts blindly, and to the injury of man, it needs the guidance of reason and knowledge.

Secondly. Christ established no ceremonies at all : he exacted virtuous conduct, not the observance of rites. The reformation of Luther abolished some of the ceremonies that had been improperly ingrafted upon Christianity, but not all. That they have ever been fruitful sources of discord, and ought to be relinquished.

Thirdly. Mankind are not at present under any kind of miraculous dispensation ; that God has no *supernatural* dealings with men, that we can observe ; and does not now impart the *special influence* of his Spirit to a few individuals and at particular times, as is claimed by modern revivalists. That this doctrine of revivalists, lies at the foundation of religious fanaticism,—is not essential to Christian faith or conduct, and if enforced by preachers and believed by the people, some form of this fanaticism will always disturb the church and the world.

Fourthly. That numerous meetings for religious purposes, night meetings, camp meetings, protracted meetings, &c., injure the health,—cause insanity, and

other diseases, and ought to be abandoned as unscriptural, and very unreasonable in this age, when information on all subjects can be obtained by reading. That they produce and perpetuate great excitement, that is particularly dangerous to females, to mothers, and the rising generation.

Fifthly. The Sabbath is a *day of rest* for man and beast, and ought to be so regarded in practice.

Sixthly. That religious worship and the cultivation of devotional feelings, are beneficial to man, when not carried to an unreasonable extent.\*

\* As a celebrated philosopher observed, "La devotion, est un opium pour l'ame, elle egare, anime, soutient quand on en prend peu : une trop fort dose endort, ou rend furieux, ou tue."

THE END.





