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ARTICLE I.

THE INFLUENCE OF PRESBYTERIANISM ON THE CULTURE OF
THE HUMAN INTELLECT AND THE PROGRESS OF PIETY.

The influence of the Presbyterian system on the culture and progress of the human intellect well deserves attention and investigation on the part of the philosopher and the Christian. We doubt not that the influence alluded to will be discovered, on careful and candid inquiry, to have been deep, wide-spread and salutary. A system so thoroughly organized as Presbyterianism, so powerful, so far-reaching, and so abiding in its general workings, cannot fail to exert a vast influence in elevating the human mind, or else in debasing it. Every political system, carried into practical operation, has an influence on mind, and every religious system, since no subject agitates man's soul so profoundly as that of religion, must exert at least as marked an influence, in proportion to the area over which it operates. Fetishism, the lowest form of religion, arising from a low condition of the human intellect, serves to fetter it in debasement and darkness. Christianity, the noblest form of religion, elevates, expands and ennobles the intellect of man.

It is, in every respect, important to ascertain the influence of any religious system on the human mind. That influence, according to the nature and degree of it, furnishes presumptive proof of the truth, or falsity of the system itself. Whatever debases the intellect, tends also to debase the heart: whatever improves the intellect, tends also to elevate and purify man's moral nature; so,

close is the sympathy between the various powers of man's nature, so great their cooperation, so decided their reciprocal influence. It is true, indeed, that in man's fallen nature, we often discover a disproportion between the moral and the intellectual culture of individuals. But the philosopher has no other instrument for raising the moral character of a people except mental education. The gospel too, operates, in purifying the affections, through the instrumentality of truth, conveyed to the understanding.

Beyond a doubt, Christianity in general, tends to elevate men in the scale of intellectual being. It has actually attained the result of so elevating mankind. The intellectual superiority of Christian nations over nations that lie under the dominion of other religions than Christianity, is not only affirmed in all Christian lands, but admitted in all others, except that which calls itself celestial. To show how the Christian religion has a tendency to improve the human intellect, were to prepare the way for the investigation of the subject proposed to your consideration now,—were to go far towards showing that, the intellectual influence of Presbyterianism must be, to a peculiar degree, salutary. Christianity, in presenting to men the Bible, furnishes to them the noblest literature, and secures to them the most effective means of intellectual culture. As the body acquires vigour by violent exercise, so the mind acquires strength by the effort to grasp great truths: and Christianity certainly discloses truths of the very greatest breadth and magnitude. It improves every class of man's intellectual powers: not merely his memory, and imagination, and taste, but his reasoning faculty. Even those truths of our religion, which a man cannot comprehend on account of their vastness, may exercise and invigorate his intellect, because he can apprehend them. Christianity has advanced the interests of human science by teaching men to bow to the mysteries of revelation—thus leading them to expect mysteries in nature, to study the true limits of the human understanding, and to devote to the discovery of ascertainable truth, that mental strength that might otherwise have been experienced in a profitless attempt to pierce the inscrutable. Nothing

is more profitable to the mind than to recognize the mysterious as mysterious—to receive the mysterious sometimes as true, instead of disbelieving it because our limited minds are unable to fathom it. Christianity also, promotes man's intellectual welfare, by producing an honesty and earnestness of character, which leads to the thorough investigation of valuable truth. It does not allow its votary to be a trifler. To him the responsibilities of every human being seem awfully vast. He does not act from motives of petty vanity, but with a careful regard to his account at the divine tribunal, and with a view to promote the interests of that humanity, whose welfare, because it is recognized by him, as destined to immortality, seems worthy of his best exertions. The Christian religion, by infusing a spirit of benevolence, has advanced the physical services and practical arts, and thus promoted the intellectual culture of mankind. We refer for information on this subject, to MacCaulley's splendid criticism on Lord Bacon's works. That brilliant essayist states that "it is chiefly to the great reformation of religion that we owe the great reformation of philosophy. He states it as the peculiarity of Bacon's philosophy, that "its object was the good of mankind, in the sense in which the mass of mankind always have understood, and always will understand, the word good." The ancients regarded everything practical as unworthy the attention of a philosopher, because the learned among them, were destitute of that sincere desire to promote the happiness of the people, which the Christian religion inspires. Christians are, indeed, induced to cultivate all sciences, moral, intellectual and physical, with the hope of deriving from them confirmation of the truths of their own blessed system of religion. The political influences of Christianity have been also favourable to the developement and progress of the human intellect. Presbyterianism, as one form of the Christian religion, must be admitted to have something of the intellectual tendencies that belong to that religion in general, and to have had some share in promoting that intellectual growth among men which Christianity has so signally secured.

We hope to escape the charge of arrogance when we

affirm that Christianity, in none of its various forms, is more adapted to promote the mental improvement of men than is Presbyterianism. It may be, that the careful and candid inquirer will conclude, after a full investigation of the subject, that the Presbyterian system is, above all systems of religion, the best suited to expand and give impulse to the general mind of a people. We must admit, however, that Congregationalism, as it has existed in this country and Great Britain, is so much akin to Presbyterianism as closely to resemble it, as far as its influence over intellect is to be regarded. If the Presbyterian system has the advantage in this matter, it must result from the conservative influence of leading minds which, without oppressing the intellects they have controlled, have guarded against the formation of wild and extravagant opinions.

It has never been objected against the Calvinistic faith that it is not intellectual in its nature, and that it does not address itself to men's intellects. On the contrary, it is often objected to it, that it is too metaphysical, too purely and coldly intellectual. It is not our purpose now, to defend it from the charge of extreme intellectuality. The objection to it of excess in intellectuality, is at least an admission that it is intellectual.

In the Presbyterian system are found certain doctrines, of a profound nature, which some men affirm to be purely philosophic, but which we believe to be subjects of revelation, the study of which is well adapted to call into exercise the powers of the mind. Among these are the doctrines of the imputation of Adam's sin, and the substitutionary sacrifice of the divine Redeemer. We know of no subjects better adapted to call in active operation a man's intellectual energies, as well as his affections. That mysterious doctrine of predestination, which is peculiar to the Calvinistic system, has the healthful intellectual influence of restraining the mind when it becomes presumptuous, and of teaching it that there are limits, beyond which it would in vain essay to pass. Although this doctrine is inscrutable, we know no better intellectual exercise than that of ascertaining from the careful comparison of different portions of the Scriptures, the fact of the consistency of the divine Sove-

reignty with the moral responsibility of man. We admit that a niceness of discrimination is necessary to the reception of the Calvinistic system, but the very effort which the mind makes in its close analysis of truth, both sharpens and invigorates it. Hugh Miller, the great geologist, a careful observer of men and of systems, ascribes the intellectual superiority of his countrymen to the influence which the study of the Calvinistic system has exerted upon them. In reply to the question of Englishman, as to "what good all the theology of Scotland does," Miller, in his "First impressions of England and its People," represents himself as saying, "Independently altogether of religious considerations, it has done for our people what all your societies for the diffusion of useful knowledge, and all your Penny and Saturday Magazines, will never do for yours; it has awakened their intellect, and taught them how to think. The development of the popular mind in Scotland, is the result of its theology." Some may imagine that it is no argument for a religious system that it is intellectual, but it ought not to surprise us that God has chosen to develop *all* the powers of the human soul, through the instrumentality of his revealed truth.

According to the Presbyterian system, great prominence is given to the influence of truth in the sanctification of the heart. It does not recommend mere forms or mere excitement, as the great means of spiritual progress, but the discovery, and love, and constant survey of the truth. Whether the opinions of Presbyterians on this subject, be right or wrong, it is certain that they tend to promote the study of the truth, and in the same ratio, to secure mental development. To Presbyterians, the sole rule of faith is the Bible—a book, more than any other, adapted to improve the intellect as well as the heart. The very fact that Presbyterians have no pompous and splendid ritualistic collection, serves to fix their minds more steadfastly on the great doctrines of their religion. Any system of religion that withholds the Bible from the common people, or, in any respect, undervalues it as a rule of faith, must deprive men of one of the surest means of intellectual, as well as of spiritual improvement. In this respect, how greatly Pres-

byterianism has the advantage over Romanism, or even Puseyism. Presbyterians claim and exercise the right of searching the Scriptures for themselves, of forming their own religious opinions, without dictation from any human being; and we certainly know nothing which gives more vigour to the mind than the unchecked and unfettered investigation of religious truth.

The study of truth always improves the understanding. Error warps the mind. Presbyterianism is not only truth, but divine truth. It is not only divine truth, but a large portion of that truth. It includes truth that many Christians regard as unessential to salvation, but that is not unimportant as an instrument of mental discipline. To leave out of a religions system, any great Scriptural truth, is to impair its power as an agent of intellectual improvement. Presbyterianism is truth in its harmony, truth reaching high and deep, and spreading itself far and wide.

The importance that Presbyterians attach to the Pulpit evinces the intellectual power of their system. They have always demanded that their religious teachers be men of thorough education and respectable learning, thus securing to the country of their residence, a class of intellectual men, as well as a class of teachers for the people. Were these men engaged in instructing on any scientific subject, their influence in elevating the popular mind would be, necessarily, immense. Especially is it so, when the science which they teach is the sublimest of all sciences, that which, more than all others, gives mind to the soul,—that to which the study of all other sciences ought to be as a threshold, itself, as Lord Bacon has said, “the haven and Sabbath of all man's contemplations.” It will, perhaps, not be denied that Presbyterian Churches have been almost everywhere distinguished by the thoroughness of the instruction given from their pulpits. No where have the doctrines of the Gospel been more fully unfolded than among them. In this respect, they have presented a striking contrast to the Church of Rome, in which the public exposition of the Divine word has been sadly neglected, and the altar has been raised far above the pulpit. In many of our Protestant Churches, a very inferior position is assign-

ed to the preaching of the divine truth. The liturgy and the music of the deep-toned organ are regarded as of primary and of almost exclusive importance, and a small proportion of the season of religious service is allowed for the exposition of God's word. We can hardly think that this is as it should be; it is certainly not the state of things best adapted to lead to the intellectual improvement of the preacher, or to the best instruction of his audience. The preaching of the distinguishing doctrines of Calvinism, in English pulpits, was prohibited in the reigns of several of the kings of England: nor have those doctrines, which are best adapted to give vigour to the mind, usually been the favourite themes of the Episcopal clergy generally, either in Great Britain, or the United States of America. When mere fervid appeals, however necessary they may be in themselves, are substituted for constant and careful doctrinal instructions, men must fail to derive through the pulpit, that intellectual improvement which it may confer without any diversion from its great designs, and even while engaged most directly in the fulfilment of them. Taste-ful and elegant composition, that contains no robust thought, can only at best, cultivate the taste. The mode of exhibiting truth, which the Presbyterian system encourages, not to say imposes, may not always be the most pleasing or popular. It often displeases, from the very fact that it tasks the intellect. It becomes us to consider, however, that it is not the lesson which is most easily learned that is always the most profitable in any respect, or that usually imparts most vigour or discipline to the mind of the learner. It were idle to deny that many of the most eloquent preachers of the word, men whose productions are lit up with the fire of genius, and are destined to be admired through all coming ages, have been found in the Romish Church. The names of Bossuet, Bourdaloue, and Massillon, are immortal. It were uncandid and vain to refuse to the Church of England, the credit of producing scores of able preachers, men of genius, piety, and profound learning. Jeremy Taylor, Lowth, Butler, and Henry Melville are in the memories of all men. All the Protestant denominations have had their preachers, over whom

none in the Presbyterian Church can claim preëminence. In every church the ministers of religion have accomplished much towards elevating and enlightening the public mind. Notwithstanding, we give, utterance to the conviction, that the mode of instruction adopted by Calvinistic ministers is peculiarly adapted to train and invigorate the minds of their hearers.

Presbyterians have been distinguished by their attention to the religious education of their children. As the parent presents his child, in the house of God, that he may have administered to it, the holy-rite of baptism, he promises to teach it to read God's holy oracles. Some have supposed that the children of Presbyterian families are well instructed in religion, mainly in consequence of the promise made by parents, at the season of their presenting their children for baptism. For centuries the children of Presbyterians have been taught the shorter catechism of the Westminster Assembly of Divines. That catechism contains a summary of the doctrines of the Scriptures. It was composed by men of superior intellectual attainments and endowments, and is one of the most valuable productions of the human mind. It is not understood, indeed, but is retained by the mind of childhood. Once lodged in the memory, however, it comes more and more within the reach of the understanding, and to say nothing of its religious effects, cannot fail to exert a constant and powerful influence in developing the minds of those who have learned it. Religious truth exerts as real a disciplinary influence on the human intellect as truth of any other sort. The Bible is not inferior to any other book of literature, as a means of mental culture: and that Catechism which was the joint product of many of the greatest minds of the seventeenth century—that era during which there were giants in the earth, may at least, favourably compare with most of the school books of this nineteenth century. Never has any society existed, whose members had been thoroughly instructed from their childhood, in the great truths of the Christian religion, and richly imbued with the love of the Bible, that did not possess a degree of intelligence and mental discipline far greater than is usually found among mankind.

Presbyterians have usually been the warm advocates of mental education and general learning. So uniform, so almost invariable has been their attention to education, that we cannot regard it as accidental; it has resulted from the influence of their religious system. The system can never act healthfully without producing an attention to learning. It is not something that may exist, or may not exist, while the system continue to act. It flows inevitably from the system, when in practical operation. We may fear that genuine Presbyterianism may cease to live in any particular country or neighbourhood, but are assured that, wherever it shall live, there shall be found in alliance with it a love of learning that poverty may indeed repress, but can never wholly extinguish.

The Academy which John Calvin established at Geneva, and to which so many of the young of all Europe resorted for the purpose of acquiring a literary education, is known to fame. The first General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, made provision for the establishment of schools all over the kingdom. Hetherington, writing about the formation of the Church of Scotland, informs us, (p. 55,) that, "Education was justly regarded as of the utmost importance, and deserving every possible encouragement. It was stated as imperatively necessary, that there should be a school in every parish, for the instruction of youth in the principles of religion, grammar, and the Latin tongue; and it was further proposed, that a college should be erected in every notable town, in which logic and rhetoric should be taught, along with the learned languages. It was even suggested that parents should not be permitted to neglect the education of their children; but that the nobility and gentry should be obliged to do so at their own expense; and that a fund should be provided for the education of the children of the poor, who discovered talents and aptitude for learning." After the second reformation in Scotland, or the overthrow of prelatical power in that land, Hetherington informs us, that "Presbyteries were directed to see that schools were established in every landward parish, and such support secured to school-masters as should render education easily accessible to the whole

population of the kingdom.” After the revolution, as our historian informs us, “Some direct countenance began to be given to the exertions of the Church of Scotland, by the king; the most valuable proof of which was the act of Parliament respecting schools, realising what had been long and earnestly sought by the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, and no other church in Christendom,—a school in every Parish throughout the whole kingdom, so far supported by the public funds as to render education accessible to the poorest in the community.” In Scotland, the kirk and the school have ever stood side by side. But, not only in Geneva and Scotland, have Presbyterians been the patrons of education: everywhere have they shown a similar love for learning, a similar solicitude about the instruction of their offspring. In the establishment of many of the Colleges of this American land, they have had an important agency. They have established primary schools everywhere over the face of the country. Nor do we rightly estimate their intellectual influence if we fail to consider to what an extent their example has awakened and fostered in other denominations a zeal for education, until in the work of establishing schools and colleges, they are beginning to rival,—we trust that they will never be able to excel Presbyterians. It deserves to be mentioned that the intellectual influence of Presbyterian Ministers, as teachers of secular schools, has been immense. Who can calculate the influence of such men as Caldwell, of North Carolina, and Waddell, of South Carolina, in training noble minds which have given an impulse to the intellect of the entire country! There are many of these ministers, teachers of primary schools, and unknown to fame, who have contributed as much towards the intellectual advancement of our people, as those more distinguished ministers of our church who have presided over literary institutions of a higher grade.

The observance of the Sabbath, not merely as a day of recreation and rest, but as a day of religious reading and reflection, tends greatly to awaken up the thought and promote the intellectual culture of a people. Whatever may be denied to the Presbyterians of Great Bri-

tain arid Ireland, and the United States, this will be conceded to them that they have always been the unyielding advocates of a serious observance of the Sabbath,—that they have always entertained lofty views of its sanctity. The Presbyterians of Great Britain and Ireland (and let it be remembered that the first Puritans were generally, in all their views, Presbyterians) restored the Christian Sabbath to the Christian Church, as really as Luther restored to it the doctrine of justification by faith; expelled from the church unworthy views of the Sabbath, as really as the Reformers of Switzerland expelled from it unworthy notions of the sacraments. To secure to a people every seventh day, for meditation on the themes which are best fitted to give scope to the understanding,—to keep alive the remembrance of that day, is to confer on that people one of the highest intellectual advantages.

We shall speak, at some other time, of the agency of Presbyterianism in the diffusion of civil liberty. Denying the claims of a lordly priesthood, it asserts the rights of conscience, the rights of private judgment, and men who are accustomed to think for themselves on the great subject of religion, soon claim independence of thought on all questions of political interest: they will be politically free. We may say of Presbyterians, in the language of Burke, “The people are Protestants; and of that kind, which is the most adverse to all implicit submission of mind and opinion, this is a persuasion not only favourable to liberty, but built upon it.” He that does not recognize the influence of Presbyterianism on the establishment of civil liberty in Great Britain and the United States of America, is either ignorant of the history of those countries, or had read it to very little purpose. Shall we be required to prove that civil freedom is favourable to the development of the human mind, that it gives scope and exercise to its faculties? Think of Athens, at once the seat of learning and freedom; of Rome, the influence of whose free institutions on learning, abided for years after the Republic itself had perished; of Great Britain and our own native land which, as far as the general intelligence of the peoples is concerned, stand preëminent in modern history. It has

been discovered in all ages, that despotism crushes the intellect of a people, and that wherever there is liberty, there is thought. The taste may not, indeed, always be cultivated in free countries, in proportion to the culture of the other powers of the mind, but from their development must result, ultimately, the culture of the taste.

If the Presbyterian system exhibits most clearly the evil of sin, and displays most fully the beauty of holiness, and tends to diffuse among a people the principles of a lofty morality, then is it apparent that it is favourable, in no common degree, to the development of the human intellect. Madam de Stael has told us that, "The sentiment of the intellectual *beautiful*, while it is employed upon literary objects, must inspire a repugnance for everything mean and ferocious." With equal truth may we affirm, that the sentiment of the moral beautiful must lift the human intellect from its degradation, and animate it to thought. That it does is true, if not in the case of every individual, at least where communities and society at large are concerned.

It is an historic fact that the people, who have been brought up under the influence of Presbyterianism, have been distinguished, in the aggregate, by their intelligence and intellectual acumen. This has been the case in all countries, and we may even say, in all communities, in which the system has prevailed. In countries, where other systems of religion have been established by law, Presbyterians have not, indeed, from the very necessity of the case, generally occupied the most exalted stations in society. But such is the control of their system over intellect, that they become intelligent and thoughtful, despite every disadvantage as to fortune and rank. We doubt whether any population, however debased, can be brought under the control of this system, without undergoing a rapid intellectual advancement. Before the Reformation, the people of Scotland were sunk exceedingly low in the scale of intellectual being; since that period, they have been intellectually superior to any people on the earth. Hugh Miller affirms, doubtless with truth, that, "Intellectual character does not by several degrees, sink so low in Scotland as in England." Compare those portions of Ireland, in which

Presbyterianism has the ascendancy, with those portions of that unhappy land that are under the dominion of Popery, and consider the superiority of the inhabitants of the former in mental education and intelligence, as well as in almost every thing that can adorn human character, and render human beings happy. So much does the congregationalism of New England resemble the Presbyterian system, that we may properly appeal to the intellectual influence of the former to illustrate and confirm the truth which we are now endeavouring to establish. We fear no contradiction when we affirm that, in the United States of America, no congregations assembled for religious worship are composed of men of more intellectual vigour, or greater general intelligence, than those that assemble under the Presbyterian banner.

It has, sometimes, been affirmed, that the Presbyterian Church has made but a stunted contribution to the literature and science of the world. We are, by no means, prepared to admit the truth of this affirmation. The ministers of this church have not, indeed, devoted themselves to mere literary and scientific pursuits, for the reason that they have been engaged in fulfilling the arduous and sacred duties of their important and holy office, and yet the contributions of Presbyterian ministers to theological literature can receive contempt from no man acquainted with the literary history of the world, either on account of the smallness of their number, or the inferiority of their nature. As theological writers, John Calvin, Francis Turretin, and Jonathan Edwards, (whom we claim, as a Presbyterian, because he was a Presbyterian in *all* his opinions,) have never been equaled in any age, in any country, or church. Few more able writers have ever existed than Daillé and Blondel, of the Reformed Church of France. Who has more eloquently defended the principles of the Reformation than the Hugonot Claude? Wherever Presbyterianism has flourished, it has produced able theological scholars, who have left their writings as a legacy to the world. Scotland has had her Hugh Binning, her Samuel Rutherford, her William Guthrie, her John Livingstone, her Thomas Boston, her John McLaurin, her Thomas Chal-

mers, her McCosh. To say nothing further of her early divines, Switzerland has lately produced her Gaussen, her D'Aubigné, her Vinet, the latter called the Chalmers of Switzerland, but who seems to us more to resemble Blaise Pascal than any man, who has lived since Pascal's day. In beauty and purity of style, as well as in richness of thought, these writers have, perhaps, no superiors among writers of the present age. Few divines have written with more power than Holland's Presbyterian Voetius and Witsius. In the United States, the Presbyterian Church has produced many theological writers, whose works are esteemed in every Protestant land, and which have done as much as any writings which have come from the pens of Americans to establish a literary reputation for our nation. The sermons of Samuel Davies are regarded by many judicious persons as the best that have been published in any land. The most esteemed theological writer that Germany has produced for centuries, Neander, was Presbyterian in his faith. England, since the non-conformists were silenced, has given birth to such able writers as Richard Baxter, Philip Dodridge and Isaac Watts, who may be fairly regarded as Presbyterian. Were you to survey a list of the works on practical religion, which have been issued by the American Tract Society, you would discover that a vast proportion of them are the products of Presbyterian ministers. He that examines the publications of the Presbyterian Board of Publication, will discover from the books that it has published, whose origin was Presbyterian, that Presbyterianism has borne a noble part in producing a religious literature for the world.

Works of a purely literary and scientific character have also been produced in no inconsiderable numbers by Presbyterians. We need only refer you to the writings of the historian, Robertson; of the rhetoricians, Campbell and Blair; of the moral philosopher, Beattie; of the metaphysicians, Reid, Stewart, Brown and Sir Wm. Hamilton; of the geologist, Hugh Miller, and the natural philosopher, Sir D. Brewster. If general admiration can confer a high niche in the temple of poetic fame, Robert Pollock has secured it. You need not to be reminded of the vast amount of literature of every

sort, that Scotland has produced during the last fifty years,—a literature, produced mainly by men reared under the influence of Presbyterianism,—a literature unsurpassed by any that has grown up any where in these latter ages of the world. The most finished poem in the English language, the “Burial of Sir John Moore,” was produced by Wolfe, a young Presbyterian clergyman, of Ireland. It is understood that Guizot, the great statesman and the gifted writer of France, was brought up under the influence of a religious system substantially Presbyterian.

In illustrating our subject, we have taken only a few names from the long list of distinguished Presbyterian writers. We could present before your memories names not less illustrious, if we were permitted to claim, as we may to a degree, all those great writers whose religious creed and ceremonies have been identical with, and whose views of church government have nearly resembled our own. *Jown* Howe, a man who was surpassed by no Englishman, even in the 17th century, as a theological writer, who has been pronounced superior to all writers on Divinity, by one of the most gifted men of the 19th century. *John Owen*, whose works constitute an inexhaustible store-house of theology, and *John Milton*, the great epic poet of the world, were all, at least, Puritans. The literature that has been produced by the Independents of Great Britain during the last half century, has been large in amount and noble in character: so also, the Congregationalists of New England have furnished some of the finest writers that this or any other country has produced.

We are to bear in mind that all this vast amount of Presbyterian literature has been produced with the aid of comparatively little patronage from governments,—such as has been lavished on writers of those religious opinions,—which are more agreeable to the monarchs of the world.

We shall offer now, some reflections on the influence of Presbyterianism in the formation and culture of piety. By piety, we mean love to God, and obedience to his commandments. We use the term so broadly as to in-

clude morality, as it is ordinarily understood, although we shall have chiefly in view man's dispositions to the Creator. We need not tell you that we recognize no piety as genuine, except that which is produced by the special influence of the Divine Spirit, and which, as far we know, is, in adults at least, associated with a belief of revealed truth.

What is the influence of any religious system on piety, is the question which we are most interested to agitate in regard to it. Piety is the especial avowed object of every religious system: without the attainment of which the most ardent of its admirers would pronounce it unworthy of being confided in or maintained. It is easy to see that it is a matter of little importance what may be the political influence of a religious system, or what its influence in promoting good morals, or securing esthetical culture, compared with its influence in advancing holiness among mankind, and preparing immortal man for an immortality of moral purity and of peace. We are too prone to consider only those benefits of religion that belong to this life: and we fear that there are many who give their approbation to Christianity more because they see all its advantages to human society, as it now exists, than because they have any true faith in its everlasting results. But, let us consider how soon all the things of this world shall vanish from before us, and that the very world we inhabit shall dissolve: while the soul of man shall continue, through an endless duration in the condition in which it shall be left from the absence of religion, as it shall have departed from the world, or in that condition in which piety shall have placed it. Better were it to forego all the advantages which we can possess in this world—immeasurably better—than to lose sight of that system of religious truth, which is best adapted to prepare us for an estate of perpetual holiness and felicity beyond the narrow horizon of our earthly life.

Some have affirmed that the Calvinistic system has a tendency to encourage men in sin and impenitence. We know, however, that the same objection has been urged by infidels against our divine Christianity: and we believe with as much reason and as little force. Few,

however, have had the effrontery to affirm that the practical effects of Calvinism had been otherwise than salutary. Whether we reason from the nature of our system, or from its palpable effects, we shall see that, as much as any system of religion ever known among mankind, it has a tendency to produce the fruits of holiness.

Presbyterianism tends to produce holiness, because it is truth. To affirm that Divine truth has a tendency to produce holiness in God's intelligent and moral creatures may be, in your opinion, only to utter a truism,—a proposition so palpably true, as not to demand, or to admit of discussion. Yet men, whose aims seem to have been virtuous, have evinced a surprising indifference to Divine truth. Many have set themselves to work to produce right action, without the inculcation of right principles. Some have gone even further—have treated with contempt the opinions of those who have insisted on the importance of imparting rigid instruction in the Christian doctrines, charging them with narrowness of mind and coldness of heart. We hear constantly the words of one of our most admired poets quoted with approbation:

“He can't be wrong, whose life is in the right,”

—words that imply that the attainment of truth is a matter of indifference, as regards moral action. There are even those, in these latter days, who, while they profess Christianity, deny the very existence of an *objective* revelation. We are justified, then, in offering you a few reflections on the sanctifying tendencies of truth.

We do not affirm that revealed truth necessarily produces holiness, but that holiness is the natural and legitimate fruit of truth. Lord Bacon has told us that, “certain it is that *veritas* and *bonitas* (truth and goodness,) are, as the seal and the print: for truth prints goodness.” Abercrombie says, “A primary and essential element, in the regulation of the will, is a correct knowledge of the truths and motives which tend to influence its determination. The highest class of these comprehends the truths of religious belief, a series of moral causes, the tendencies of which are of the most important kind, and calculated to exert an uniform in-

fluence on every man who surrenders himself to them. For this purpose a correct knowledge of them is required." Truth leads us to the attainment of our worldly interests, and is equally important to our acquisition of an immortal welfare. The history of those nations with which we have been directly, or through our ancestors connected, convinces us of the importance of Divine truth to the preservation among us of every thing which has even the semblance of holiness. The history of all lands proves the indispensableness of Divine truth to the existence of moral excellence. Truth is after godliness. All Scripture is profitable. We say, in the words of Sir James McIntosh, that "they who have insisted on right belief, have produced a higher morality than those who have merely presented moral precepts."

Truth is favourable to the cultivation of piety, because it has a tranquilizing and soothing effect on the mind. Bacon says, "Certainly, it is Heaven on earth, to have a man's mind move in charity, rest in Providence, and turn upon the poles of truth." Faith is founded on truth: and we are sanctified by faith. Our faith ought to have not merely intensity, but breadth: it ought to receive, not merely some things most cordially, but to grasp all that Heaven has disclosed to us. Truth is also indispensable to holiness, because necessary as the regulator of conscience, upon whose healthful operations all right moral action depends. We are not to be told that the knowledge of the peculiar doctrines of Presbyterianism is not necessary at all, because the belief of them is not essential to salvation; as portions of revealed truth, they are important in the work of human sanctification.

The evangelical system has proved itself adapted to secure holiness. "The grace of God hath appeared unto all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly, in this present life." "Truth, as it is in Jesus," is of all truth the most promotive of holiness, because it is the noblest of all. It secures a pure and lofty morality, and a deep and fervid spirituality, which seem altogether alien to our curse-smitten world. Philosophy may despise, and infidelity may deride this truth, but we have witnessed its results in a world whose situation, without

it, would seem desperate. It has been achieving its triumphs for eighteen hundred years. Let the apostles of Christ, let the martyrs amid the flames, let the Reformers, let the missionaries in heathen lands, let the dying believers in every age, let all the redeemed in Heaven tell us, whether the evangelic doctrines are not sanctifying truth. Now, Calvinism not merely embraces these evangelical doctrines, but presents them before the world more prominently; we believe, than any other religious system. No other system but the evangelical, however it may restrain and direct men's outward action, can produce that love to God which is essential to true piety and accepted obedience.

Presbyterianism has a tendency to disclose, with peculiar vividness, the Divine justice and the evil of sin, by the views it presents of the great atonement, especially by the doctrine it holds up of the imputation of man's guilt to the blessed Redeemer. We need only remind you that these views of the Divine justice and the evil of sin tend to the production and promotion of piety. You well know that piety is always proportioned to our consciousness of our sinfulness, and to our abhorrence of it. It is when we see its magnitude and evil, that we ask and obtain its forgiveness, and seek to escape its power, by placing ourselves under the dominion of a positive holiness. Nor can any man possess any just conceptions of the sinfulness of sin, who does not see the inflexibility of Heaven's justice so great that the violation of His law can never go unavenged, that sin can never go unpunished, even when Divine mercy interposes to rescue and uphold the sinner himself.

It is objected to the doctrine of Predestination that it is unfavourable to piety, tending to prevent both its formation and its progress in the soul. There can be no doubt that many advance this objection with the most honest purpose. It may be that these objectors have not placed this subject before them in all its possible attitudes, and viewed it in all its possible aspects. Ignorant and short-sighted creatures as we are, we may easily imagine those doctrines to be disastrous, which infinite wisdom has published for the most beneficent purposes. Had men been left to the guidance of their own discre-

tion in making the Holy Scriptures, doubtless many facts, which are therein recorded, would have been omitted, and many doctrines which are therein made known, would have been concealed from human vision. There are those, however, who think that the doctrine of Predestination may be most salutary in its influence, alike on the formation, the preservation and the progress of piety: that it has been the instrument of humbling hearts which nothing else seemed able to humble, and that it has furnished consolation to many a tempest-tost spirit, when ready to sink into despair. Without lofty views of the Deity, it is not possible to attain a lofty piety: and to represent the Deity as acting without a purpose, as having brought into existence an universe whose destinies he could not controul, or as being thwarted in His plans by the obstinacy of human wills, and thus shorn of His omnipotence,—is, in the estimation of many, to make an unworthy and degrading representation of His nature. There are many, who can not conceive of the Deity as really omniscient, while future things are beyond His controul, and are to be regulated altogether by the caprices of human beings. A belief in the Divine providence certainly serves to foster piety; and there are those who can not conceive of a Divine providence that has no purposes to fulfil; and who can not believe that a Divine providence can exist in human affairs at all, unless it has controul over the volitions of men as well as over the waves of the sea. To limit Divine providence to mere material affairs, seems to restrict it too much for the conscious wants of the Christian. To extend the control of God over the wills of men, is to affirm what necessarily implies the doctrine of Predestination in all its fulness. We know that patience under the afflictions of this life is eminently favourable to the growth of piety: and certainly nothing is better adapted to reconcile a Christian to the apparent ills he endures than the belief that Heaven has ordained them—than the belief that all things are so arranged by infinite wisdom as to work together for good to those that love God, and are the called according to His purpose. Humility is a Christian grace of the highest beauty: it has been affirmed of it that it is the chief grace of the Christian: and

we know nothing better adapted to humble the soul before God, than a survey of his absolute sovereignty,—than the conviction that our destinies are completely in His hands, that, in the language of St. Paul, “He hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and that whom he will He hardeneth.” This truth, fully apprehended, has been the instrument of making multitudes of proud souls bow in submission at the cross, by whom all the other truths of revelation seemed to have been unheeded. It strikes terror into the heart, which nothing else seems able to waken to conviction. It is conceded that the Christian, who perceives that his salvation is wholly of grace, is apt to make the most rapid and exalted attainments in piety. And who perceives that his salvation is a gratuitous gift, so fully as the man who sees that it was not conferred in consideration of good works foreseen in him, but without regard to any excellence of his own, and for the purpose that he might attain holiness before God? One of the greatest stimulants to piety in the Christian heart is gratitude: but whose gratitude can be so great as his, who knows that God's love to him is peculiar and distinguishing, and has been specially designed for him from everlasting ages? This gratitude of itself, will impel him along a career of heavenly obedience, when it anchors itself on the atonement. It is said that a man, who believes himself predestinated to eternal life, will become careless about his salvation and indifferent to sin. But we reply, that the child of God will be preserved from this carelessness—from this indifference as a thing habitual. No man has a right to suppose himself predestinated to eternal life, for no man has a right to suppose himself a Christian, who is indifferent to sin. The Christian knows that he is as really predestinated to the exercise of faith and repentance, and to the practice of good works, as to the attainment of Heaven. He knows that God hath chosen him in Christ before the foundation of the world, that he should be holy and without blame before Him in love, (Ex. xi: 4,) that God hath chosen him to salvation, through the sanctification of the Spirit and the belief of the truth.—2 Thess. 2: 12. He knows that he is elect unto obedience.—1 Pet. i: 2. To suppose that a doctrine, which

presents the noblest views of God's nature, that inspires the highest confidence in his providence, that is best adapted to humble the soul and exclude all boasting and self-righteousness,—that produces patience, and nerves the heart to fortitude, and awakens gratitude and love to God,—to suppose that such a doctrine can be detrimental to piety seems to us altogether unreasonable. On the other hand, it must be eminently favourable to it. We are speaking of the natural effect of this doctrine: we do not deny that men may wrest it to their destruction, as also the other Scriptures. There is nothing so good that human deformity may not pervert and misapply it.

Presbyterianism, in as much as it exhibits the Scriptures as the only rule of conduct and belief, fosters the study of the pure and unadulterated word of truth, and in the same proportion, tends to nourish piety, and thus has the advantage over all those systems of religious faith, which do not give the same preëminence to the word of God. Certainly a system which relies on the Divine truth mainly, as the instrument of sanctification, must be more favourable to piety than one which places an undue confidence in human traditions, or in rites and ceremonies, or one that looks to mere excited feelings, as the great means of spiritual improvement.

In showing you that our system is well adapted to promote intellectual culture and good morals, we have furnished you at least presumptive proof of its favourable influence on piety. Certainly, no one will deny, that where intelligence and good morals prevail, the Gospel, in its regenerating and sanctifying influences, is most likely to find a welcome and a home.

We have said already, that Presbyterians in Great Britain, Ireland and America, have ever regarded the Christian Sabbath with the deepest reverence, and ever observed it with something of the spirit that is congenial to the purposes of the hallowed day,—that they have indeed, preserved it from being trampled into dishonour in the dust. There is something poetic and something sacred in the very thought of the sabbatic peacefulness that every seventh day reigns over the hills and valleys of favoured Scotland. The holy observance of the Sab-

bath, (as we have shown,) is good for the intellect of a people; equally favourable is it to the nurture of hallowed devotion, of genuine piety. To spend a Sabbath in the public devotions of religion, and in secret communion with God, in meditation on Divine mercies and in anticipation of human rest, diffuses a hallowed fragrance over the heart, and at the same time prepares it for the conflicts which, during the ensuing week, it must encounter, amid the business transactions of an ungodly world. Unless the sanctity of the Sabbath be recognized in all its fulness, the public duties of the day will be performed in a careless and irreverent spirit: and that portion of the day, which is not allotted to public worship, will be spent, if not in positive festivity, in idle visiting and conversation, or in meditating on the secular business of the week. Happy are we when we hail the coming of the Sabbath with hearts of fervid devotion—when we use its early hours in preparation for the services of the Sanctuary—when we feel that all its moments are consecrated to God, employing its afternoons and its evenings in secret supplication, in religious discourse, in heaven-directed meditation, and in songs of praise to the Giver of our salvation! Honour to the memories of the men, who have effected for us the reformation of the Christian Sabbath.

Presbyterians have ever been the advocates of the rigid administration of ecclesiastical discipline. That they have discharged their whole duty in reference to this matter, we are far from affirming, but they have acquitted themselves here as faithfully as any, more faithfully than most. We know how exact the early church in Geneva, when its Presbyterianism was pure, was in guarding the purity of its members. The Puritans, who were chiefly Presbyterians, while they remained in the Church of England, insisted that not merely those whose lives were scandalous, but those also who gave no evidence of sincere piety, should be excluded from the communion of the church. We believe that few things tend more directly to the enlargement of piety among a people than the faithful administration of ecclesiastical discipline.

Presbyterians have never adopted those Erastian prin-

ciples which are so detrimental to the piety of a church. It is true that Presbyterian churches have, sometimes, been more closely united to the States in which they flourished, than we can approve or could have desired. Still they have acknowledged no head of the church except the Lord Jesus Christ, and have rarely failed to claim that independence of civil authority to which they were entitled.

That faithful instruction of their children in religious truth, for which Presbyterians have ever been distinguished, is eminently favourable to the nurture of piety. Experience has ever proved that the piety is most mature and fervent of those, who are most deeply imbued in the Scriptures: and they are such, who, like Timothy, have learned the Scriptures from their childhood. The instructions of early life may indeed be disregarded, and without special grace none secure salvation. It will be discovered, however, that the largest number of the consistently and fervently pious are among those who have been early familiar with Divine truth.

It is an historical fact, that a very large proportion of those who have adorned by their piety the visible church of the Redeemer, have been brought up under the influence of the Calvinistic system of faith, dissociated from a prelatical form of church government. In the Church of England, the persons who have been most eminent in piety, such as Newton and Scott, have been Calvinists. They may not be regarded as fair illustrations of the influence of our system: and yet, who can doubt that Calvinism had more to do than prelacy in the formation of their religious character? We do not doubt, however, that the sincerely and profoundly pious have been reared under other systems than Calvinism. To show you the influence of the Calvinistic system on piety, we quote the following passage from the Reflections of Jonathan Edwards on the Memoirs of David Brainard: "The preceding history serves to confirm those doctrines usually called the doctrines of grace. For, if it be allowed that there is truth, substance or value in the main, of Mr. Brainard's religion, it will undoubtedly follow that those doctrines are divine: since it is evident, that the whole of it, from beginning to end, is according to that

scheme of things: all built on those apprehensions, notions, and views, that are produced and established in the mind by those doctrines. He was brought by doctrines of this kind to his awakening, and deep concern about things of a spiritual and eternal nature; and by these doctrines his convictions were maintained and carried on; and his conversation was evidently altogether agreeable to this scheme, but by no means agreeing with the contrary; and utterly inconsistent with the Arminian notion of conviction or repentance. His conversion was plainly founded in a clear, strong conviction, and undoubting persuasion of the truth of those things appertaining to these doctrines, which Arminians most object against, and his own mind had contended most about, and his conversion was no confirming and perfecting of moral principles and habits, by use and practice, and his own labour in an industrious disciplining himself, together with the concurring suggestions and conspiring aids of God's Spirit; but entirely a supernatural work, at once turning him from darkness to marvellous light, and from the power of sin to the dominion of divine and holy principles; an effect, in no regard produced by his own strength or labour, or obtained by his virtue; and not accomplished until he was first brought to a full conviction that all his own virtue, strength, labours and endeavours, could never avail anything to the procuring or producing this effect." After further remarks of a similar nature, Mr. Edwards asks, "Can the Arminians produce an instance, within this age, and so plainly within our reach and view, of such a reformation, such a transformation of a man, to scriptural devotion, heavenly-mindedness, and true Christian morality, in one that before lived without these things, on the foot of their principles, and through the influence of their doctrines?" However pleasing the office might be, it would require much time for its faithful discharge, that of describing the individuals of extraordinary piety, who, for centuries, have adorned the annals of the Presbyterian church. Their record is on high.

No societies of men have ever been more distinguished for sincere and ardent piety than those which have been constituted by Presbyterians. In this respect, be-

fore the Reformation, how favourably the Caldees and Waldenses, and the followers of Wickliffe, and the Bohemians, may be contrasted with all the contemporary professors of the Christian faith! Piety among the Hugonots, notwithstanding their implication with political questions, was decided and fervent, even so much so as to kindle the flame of devotion beneath the cold ribs of the Roman Catholic Church in France. So long as the Presbyterians of Switzerland retained their system of faith in its primitive purity, it produced among them the genuine fruits of holiness. We know how exactly the decline of piety in Geneva has corresponded with the decline of Calvinism there: and that the revival of Calvinism there, during the present century, has been attended by a corresponding rise of piety. Holland, where the Puritans were nurtured so far as to have acquired faith to cross the Atlantic, has long possessed much real spiritual religion. No man can doubt that Scotland has possessed, for three hundred years, an unusual share of piety. The Puritans of England, alike those who preferred a Presbyterian form of church government, and those who preferred independency, (they were all Calvinists,) have ever enjoyed the highest reputation for firmness of faith and fervour of devotion.—In the United States of America, the various bodies of Presbyterians have evinced as sincere and profound a piety as any other denominations in the land.

Martyrdom is regarded as a proof of at least religious sincerity and earnestness. Presbyterianism has its martyrs. What numbers who have held this persecuted faith in Bohemia, in France, in the Alpine valleys, in England and Scotland, have sealed their testimony to its saving power with their life's blood! We need only remind you of John Huss, Jerome of Prague, Patrick Hamilton, George Wishart and Hugh MacKail. No other faith, in modern ages, has offered so much blood in martyrdom. There are large religious denominations that can not praise God for a single martyr. Presbyterianism has proved its sanctifying influence, by the voluntary sacrifices which its votaries have encountered. Think of the hundreds of thousands of dollars, which the ministers of Scotland lately, relinquished for conscience

sake—of their giving up their manses—the scenes of their domestic joys, and the birth-places of their children, and in many cases their own,—and of their quitting forever their churches, dear to them from ten thousand hallowed historic and personal associations. If a missionary spirit furnishes any proof of piety, we can claim this proof of it for Presbyterian churches, which have been distinguished by a missionary as well as a martyr spirit. God has also granted to Presbyterian churches the spirit of revivals. He has bestowed on them times of refreshing from his presence. Witness that extraordinary revival in the kirk of Shotts, on Monday, 21st of June, 1630, when about five hundred gave evidence of their conversion, through the instrumentality of a single sermon. Let no man, who has read the history of Revivals under the influence of such men as Edwards and Nettleton, doubt that the preaching of Calvinistic doctrines may secure the most glorious effusions of God's Spirit. And here we quote again from the Reflections of Jonathan Edwards on the Memoirs of Brainard: “And here is worthy to be considered, not only the effect of Calvinistic doctrines, as they are called, on Mr. Brainard himself, but also the effect of the same doctrines, as taught arid inculcated by him, on others. It is abundantly pretended and asserted of late, that these doctrines tend to undermine the very foundations of all morality and religion, and to enervate and vacate all reasonable motives to the exercise, and practice of them, and lay invincible stumbling-blocks before infidels, and to hinder their embracing Christianity; and that the contrary doctrines are the fruitful principles of virtue and goodness, set religion on its right basis, represent it in an amiable light, give its motives their full force, and recommend it to the reason and common sense of mankind. But where can they find an instance of so great and signal effect of their doctrines, in bringing infidels, who were at such a distance from all that is civil, humane, sober, rational, and Christian, and so full of inveterate prejudices against these things, to such a degree of humanity, civility, exercise of reason, self-denial, and Christian virtue? Arminians place religion in morality: let them bring an instance of their

doctrines producing such a transformation of a people in point of morality.”

Mr. Bancroft informs us, “that the English nation became Protestants is due to the Puritans.” We may confidently affirm, that but for the influence of Calvinism, the people of England, Scotland and Ireland, and their descendants in the United States of America, would now possess a piety no better than that which is nourished by the Roman Catholic religion. The friends of evangelical piety in every denomination are indebted to Presbyterians mainly for the preservation of that pure scriptural faith, from which flows the spiritual piety which they hold in so high esteem. Take away from the Reformation the influence of Presbyterianism on piety, and you have shorn that great religious revolution of more than half of its glory and success.

ARTICLE II.

PHILOSOPHY OF UTILITY.

Two British vessels weighed anchor on the 25th May, 1845, with a picked crew, and a noble band of officers, and were met by a whaler on the 26th July following, in the upper waters of Baffins Bay, moored to an iceberg.* They have not been seen since; and the only trace that has been discovered of the lost navigators are a few utensils, with some spoons bearing the initials of Sir John Franklin. The exploration of a North-west passage from the Arctic ocean, has been forgotten in the zeal that has been manifested in search of those who went forth upon this perilous undertaking; and the sympathies of the civilized world have been enlisted for that true-hearted and courageous woman, who has appealed in behalf of her lost husband and his associates, to the gallantry and generosity of English and American seamen. Expedition after expedition has failed, and an-

* Kane's Expedition.