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BIBLIOTHECA SACRA

AND

THEOLOGICAL REVIEW.

CONDUCTED BY

B. B. EDWARDS AND E. A. PARK,
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WITH THE SPECIAL CO-OPERATION OF

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VOL. I.

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Matthew shows his readers, how by the very punishment which the enemies of God inflicted upon Christ, the divine prophecies were fulfilled, and he was restored to his pristine majesty.

Whoever accurately weighs these discussions, and agrees with us in opinion that the whole narrative of this Gospel is constructed by a fixed rule in successively ascending gradations, will also, we think, be persuaded, that this book is the work of *one author*; and will not be able to hold the opinion of such as assert, that it was "at first made up of a collection of the sermons of Jesus Christ, into which other narrations were afterwards interpolated."

ARTICLE V.

THE IMPRECATIONS IN THE SCRIPTURES.

By B. B. Edwards, Professor in the Theol. Seminary, Andover.

THERE is a class of objections against the divine authority of the Bible which relate simply to matters of taste, conventional usage, national custom, or oriental modes of feeling. A sufficient answer to objections of this nature is, that if the Scriptures had been conformed to modern and European modes and tastes, they would, in the same degree, lose one of the principal evidences of their genuineness. The local coloring about them, their Asiatic dress, the figures of speech which the writers employ, assure us that they are the men whom they profess to be, and that they lived at the time, and in the countries, in which they assume to have lived. The seal of honesty is thus affixed to them. We feel certain that they are men of truth. This species of evidence, though incidental and undesigned, is, in fact, one of the most important, and one least liable to be counterfeited. Besides, if the writers had undertaken to conform to what we understand by correct taste and propriety in forms of speech, they would have undertaken an impracticable task. The standard of taste, on many points, is perpetually changing. In respect to certain matters, there is a degree of fastidiousness in this country which does not exist in the higher circles in Europe. What passes current there, at the present moment, may not pass so one hundred years hence.

VOL. I. No. 1.

Another class of objections to the divine authority of the Bible, resolves itself into our unavoidable ignorance. There are certain discrepancies between different parts of the Scriptures, small for the most part, which we find it impossible wholly to reconcile, because we have not the requisite information. The matter was perfectly understood at the time the books were written, but some link in the chain of evidence has disappeared; some contemporary, uninspired writer furnished the clue, but his works have been lost, and we are necessarily left in uncertainty.¹

This objection, however, may be turned into an argument in favor of the trust-worthiness of the writers. About all honest authors, there is a species of noble negligence. They are not particularly careful to frame everything so that it will exactly fit to every other portion of a narrative or discourse. This is the artifice of one who intends to deceive, and who is afraid to trust his readers. To have made everything of this kind in the Scriptures perfectly clear, would have required an enlargement of them altogether at variance with their intended popular diffusion, and equally injurious to the habits of inquiry in the student.

There are difficulties of another kind, which must forever remain unremoved, not because of our ignorance, but from the limited nature of our faculties. There is a border land between the known and the unknown on which clouds and darkness must always rest. We cannot even gain glimpses of the truth, nor form conjectures which have any plausibility. There are points connected with the higher doctrines of Christianity, which there is no reason to suppose will be any more level to our comprehension in the future state than they are now, for the reason that they are not cognizable by a created being in any stage of his progress. They are not open to analysis. We can neither discover their nature, nor cast any light upon them by analogy. Now the Scriptures are not to be blamed for announcing the simple fact of the existence of particular objects or relations, unattended with a word of explanation. They could not make a revelation in regard to certain subjects, without involving allusions to relations or modes of being or presupposing their existence, which it would be utterly impossible for us to comprehend. He who cavils at these inexplicable difficulties, shows that he has no conception of what a divine revelation must be.

There is a difficulty of a still more serious character, than any

¹ The subject of the baptism for the dead, 1 Cor. 15: 29, is difficult of explanation because of the silence of contemporary writers.

which has been alluded to, and which is urged against many passages in the Psalms and in other parts of the Bible. This is, the wishing of evil to one's enemies, the imprecating of curses upon those who have injured us, the expression of joy in seeing calamity alight upon the wicked.

The objection, arising from this source, against the inspiration of the Scriptures, is more formidable, perhaps, than any other; or, at any rate, it is attended with some peculiar difficulties. It is felt alike by all classes of readers, unless it be in fact more perplexing to the common Christian, than it is to the professed scholar. It does not, perhaps, absolutely unsettle the faith of any believer in the Bible, but it occasions misgivings, painful doubts, and a disposition to pass by unread the portions of the Bible in question. A circumstance which increases the perplexity, is, that the imprecation is often found in close connection with language which indicates the firmest trust in God, or a high state of devotional feeling. It cannot easily be detached from things which seem to have no possible affinity with it. How can feelings so opposite coëxist?

Again, the imprecation of a calamity upon another, is apparently at war with some of the better feelings of our nature. It runs counter to the common sentiments of compassion within us. We pity a brute, though it may have injured us, especially if we behold it in a condition of suffering. It would, also, seem to be opposed to the dictates of natural religion. We see that God sends his rain upon the just and unjust, that he is constantly doing good to those who deny his authority, or blaspheme his name. The indications throughout the realms of nature and Providence would certainly lead us to feel that we should be like our Heavenly Father, and open the hand of liberal kindness to all men, to enemies and strangers as well as to kindred and friends. Most men, indeed, who enjoy the light of nature only, adopt a different practical course and take delight in acts of revenge. But this is certainly at variance with that which they might know of God and of their own duty.

Above all, however, it would seem to be wholly adverse to the spirit of the New Testament. Our Lord gave a new commandment that we should love one another. When thine enemy hungers, feed him. I say unto you love your enemies; pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you; speak evil of no man; not returning railing for railing, but, contrariwise, blessing. The whole tenor and spirit of the gospel is disinterested benevo-

lence, comprehensive charity. How are we to reconcile the loving spirit of the new dispensation with the direful maledictions of the old? When there is such a want of harmony in the different parts of the Scriptures, how can the whole be from that perfect Being, whose precepts must be all self-consistent?

The numerous, though unsatisfactory methods, which have been adopted, for the purpose of obviating the difficulty, betray the anxiety which has been caused by it in the pious mind.

I will advert to the most plausible of these methods. It has been suggested by some interpreters, among them the venerable Dr. Scott, that many of those passages, which appear in our English version, as imprecatory, as expressing a wish or desire for the infliction of evil, should be rendered as a simple affirmation, or as merely declaratory of what will take place in regard to the wicked, on the ground that the verb in the original is in the future tense where our translation has given it an optative or imprecatory signification,—the Hebrew language having no peculiar form to express the various senses of the optative.

But what shall be said of the numerous passages, where the verb is in the imperative? For example: "Pour out thine indignation upon them; let thy wrathful anger take hold upon them."¹

What shall be affirmed, in relation to the texts where those are pronounced blessed who take vengeance upon an enemy: "Happy shall he be who rewardeth thee as thou hast served us! Happy shall he be that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones!"

In what manner, again, shall we vindicate those passages, where the righteous are described as looking with complacency, feasting their eyes, as it were, upon the calamities of their oppressors? "The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance; he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked."

It would manifestly, therefore, be of no avail, if we were permitted, to render certain passages in a declaratory or prophetic sense, which are now rendered as indicating a wish or desire. The difficulty would exist elsewhere in its full extent. It is hardly necessary to say that the affirmation itself, in regard to the Hebrew language, is untenable. There are forms of the verb in Hebrew, and there are connected particles, which oblige us to translate by the terms *let*, *may*, and others, which are expressive of

¹ Ps. 69: 24, 25; also Ps. 55: 10.

wish or desire.¹ Often, too, the context will not justify any other rendering.

Another way in which it has been attempted to remove the difficulty, is to consider it as a peculiarity of the old dispensation, as one of the things engrafted upon the Mosaic economy which the Christian dispensation does not recognize, as consonant with the general spirit of the Jewish theocracy, but which a clearer revelation would annul.

But, God is the author of these dispensations, and the general spirit of the two must be the same. We ought not to vindicate one Testament at the expense of the other. What is essentially bad, at one period, must be so at all times. It is no less wrong for Joshua to indulge in malice towards the Canaanites, than it is for the apostle Paul towards Nero. Cruelty is no more tolerated in the Pentateuch than it is in the Epistle. He has not been a careful reader of the book of Deuteronomy, who has not observed the special pains which God took to impress upon the hearts of the Israelites the importance of treating kindly, not only the widow and the orphan, but the stranger, the Egyptian, the hired servant who was not of their own nation. No small part of the Levitical law is taken up with commands and appeals designed to counteract the narrow and selfish spirit of the Hebrews.

Besides, the principle runs through the entire Scriptures, the New Testament as well as the Old. "Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil. May the Lord reward him according to his works." It is not easy to see how this differs materially from the imprecations in the book of Psalms.

It has been supposed by some, that the passages in question are to be understood in a spiritual sense; that the reference to individuals is not real, but imaginary, assumed for the time being, and for an ultimate purpose wholly different from what lies on the face of them; that is, we are to apply these various maledictions to our spiritual foes, imprecating on them the terrible calamities, which were apparently, but only apparently, intended for the personal enemies of the sacred writers.

The simple statement of such a position is enough to show its absurdity. If Doeg, Ahithophel, and Alexander the coppersmith, were not real persons, what were they? Besides, whither would such a principle of interpretation carry us?

Others, still, have conjectured that temporal calamities only

¹ See Gesenius's Heb. Gramm. (Conant's Transl.) pp. 249, 262; Nordheimer, § 1078.

were desired, there being no allusion to those which may affect the soul in the future state.

But it is difficult to perceive how the principle in the one case differs from that of the other. If we may pray that a particular person may "go down alive and instantly into the grave," and that the direst plagues may fall on his family, till their very name is blotted out, do we not necessarily include those heavier evils which the soul shall suffer hereafter? It seems to be a distinction without a difference. Many passages, too, are general in their character. They do not appear to be limited to punishments which are specific in their nature, or temporary in their duration.

I come now to what, I think, must be regarded as a justification of the language in question, as going to account, in a great measure, if not wholly, for the usage of the sacred writers.

The principle may be best stated by two or three illustrations: Doeg, an Edomite herdsman, in the time of Saul, killed eighty-five unarmed, helpless priests, when he knew that they were wholly innocent of the charge made against them, and when no one else dared to touch these consecrated servants of the Lord. But with this he was not satisfied; every woman and child, every breathing thing fell under the assassin's knife. Now the very mention of the atrocity stirs up feelings in us which cannot be repressed, and which are only rendered the more poignant by reflection on the attendant circumstances.

The murder of the children at Bethlehem by Herod, another Edomite, was an act of gratuitous cruelty, which the imagination utterly refuses to carry out into its details. The shriek of the frantic Rachel in every dwelling, where there was a little child to be struck down, is all that the heart can bear. Towards the author, every reader of the history, from his day down, has had but one feeling. The horrors of conscience that he suffered on account of his murder of his wife Mariamne, and which almost ante-dated those pains that shall never have an end, do not awaken for him the slightest degree of sympathy. A happy end to that turbulent life would have shocked us.

The woman, that wished the head of the venerable forerunner of our Lord to be brought to her in a basin, who desired to enjoy a sight which would have curdled the blood of any one else, has excited a feeling in every reader's breast, that no lapse of time has in the least degree diminished. The simple words of the gospel are enough. We wish not a word of commentary. Every right-minded man has one, on the living fibres of his heart.

The striking of a great bell, at midnight, in Paris, was the signal of a deed at which men shudder now, at the distance of nearly four hundred years. It was a night long to be remembered. It needed no record on the page of history. It is engraven in ineffaceable characters on the moral sense of all Protestant Christendom. It was an outrage upon the nature which God has given to his creatures, which admits of no apology, and which necessarily demanded an atonement that is not yet fully paid.

In the darkest moments of the French revolution, we are consoled by one circumstance. There is light in one quarter of that midnight horizon. The day of retribution will come. Every spectator of the tragedy feels, if he does not say, "Blessed shall he be who rewardeth thee as thou hast done to others." And when the cup is poured into the lips—to the very dregs—there is a satisfaction, not so much heart-felt as *conscience-felt*. A great moral debt has been paid. God's righteous government has taken a firmer hold of men in consequence. The divine veracity has received a new illustration. He who sowed the wind, has reaped the whirlwind.

What is the character of the principle thus manifested? What is the nature of these emotions?

A primary element of it is indignation. Before we have had time to reflect, there is an instant, a spontaneous gush of the emotion of anger towards the evil-doer. We cannot prevent it, if we would. It is prior to all deliberation. In its first outbreak, it is above control. It is outraged nature, that will have vent. In the commission of a great wrong, particularly where the accompanying circumstances are such as to strongly arrest attention, the being is something more or less than human, whose soul is not deeply stirred.

Another element is compassion towards the injured party. We have an instinctive pity for weakness crushed in the dust, for innocence betrayed and violated. The wailing cry of infancy is in our ears; the white locks of age, dragging in the dust, are in our sight. An unoffending man, because he would not alienate the inheritance of his fathers, is defrauded of his rights, and then taken and murdered on religious grounds, by lying testimony. Sentiments of the tenderest interest in the wretched sufferer spring up. Our hearts rush towards him with the warmest compassion. We would rescue him, if possible, ere the fatal stone be thrown. Thousands in our land can testify to such an emotion, deep and not to end but with life. towards the harmless aborigines

of this country, cheated and worn out by a long course of successful villany.

Another and a principal ingredient, is a sense of justice. When a crime of extraordinary atrocity goes unpunished, we feel that justice is defrauded of its dues. We are indignant that such a wrong should be unredressed. While the crime is unatoned, we have a feeling, not only of insecurity, but that justice has been violated. Public order is disturbed; a shock has been given to that sense of rectitude which is common to man.

This is not of momentary duration, as the indignant or compassionate feeling may be. It grows stronger with the lapse of time. Reflection only adds to its intensity. Deliberation but shows its reasonableness. In other words, when a great outrage is perpetrated, nothing will calm the perturbation of our moral nature but the infliction of a penalty. The grievance must be redressed. A voice within us calls imperatively for reparation, whether we, or others, are the authors of the deed. The endurance of suffering is an indispensable condition for the return of peace. We secretly desire the speedy infliction of the penalty on ourselves if we are conscious of guilt, and, on others, also, if they are the evil-doers. And what we crave, by an irrepressible instinct of our moral nature, may we not, on fit occasions, *express in language?*¹

My next remark is, that it is an original principle of our nature; it is a simple and ultimate fact. It has all the marks of being such which can be affirmed in relation to any attribute of our nature. It is, in the first place, instantaneous in its manifestation. Its movements are rapid as the light. It gives no notice of its coming; neither can we stay it. In certain circumstances, it will arise, despite of all the physical and moral obstacles which we can array against it. In this respect, it stands precisely on the ground of the other original properties of our constitution.

Again, it is universal, and therefore, original. It has shown itself in all ages, in every state of society and period of human life, among the rudest and the most refined. Wherever the voice of a brother's blood has cried from the ground, it has found an answering echo in every bosom, no matter whether in the midst of the most polished society, or in the remotest outskirts of paganism. Or, if it has shown unwonted strength, it is in the breast of him who has the most refinement, and who has advanced the

¹ See the fine and almost christian remarks which are made on this subject, near the close of Plato's *Gorgias*.

furthest in the christian life, because such a one has the most comprehensive acquaintance with the bad effects of crime, and the greatest desire that right should triumph over fraud, and, in general, that state of the moral feelings which best fits him to show the genuine sentiments of his heart.

In the third place, its universality is attested in another way, in the most decisive manner. There are literary productions which speak to man *as man*, to his original and indestructible tendencies; productions that are so framed as to strike chords in every human breast. Now, some of the greatest of these works proceed on the ground, that justice cannot be appeased without the infliction of suffering, and that the desire of evil, either to be poured out upon ourselves or others as the case may be, instead of being an unnatural desire, is, on the contrary, one of our deepest aspirations, and its gratification an indispensable condition of happiness, or even of a tolerable measure of quiet. The catastrophe is painful, but the contrary would be far more so. In the ultimate triumph of fraud and high-handed crime, every sentiment of justice within us is shocked. The author, who would conduct us to such a result, either does not understand the deeper principles of his own moral being, or he wantonly trifles with them. Our moral nature "cries aloud" that it is meet that those who commit enormous crimes should be visited with a proportionable doom. When the avenger of blood overtakes such a one, we are glad that he did not reach the city of refuge. Now the highest work of genius is the exactest transcript of these original states and demands of our nature.

It may be maintained, further, that this feeling is not, necessarily, accompanied with any malice or ill-will towards the sufferer. An atrocious crime is committed in our neighborhood; we have the strongest sympathy for the injured party, and indignation towards the evil-doer. We unite in all proper measures to bring him to what we call a condign, that is, a deserved punishment. We rejoice when we learn that he has been apprehended, and that justice is permitted to take its appointed course. If we do not, in so many words, imprecate calamities upon him, we feel, and we perform, what amounts to the same thing. We ardently desire and pray that he may suffer punishment. If he is proved to be guilty, we are disappointed if he escape. We are even eager to coöperate in efforts to bring him within the arm of the law. But all this is not attended with any desire to witness the sufferings of a human being, or that those sufferers in themselves should

be felt. We have no malice or private revenge to gratify. The absorbing emotion is for the good of society. We have the persuasion, that if the criminal escapes, the bonds that hold men together will be weakened, if they are not destroyed. That there may be this entire freedom from personal ill-will, is shown by the fact, that our feelings are precisely similar, in kind at least, towards an offending contemporary or neighbor, and towards a notorious culprit who lived ages ago, or may now live at the ends of the earth, and whose punishment, or escape from it cannot possibly affect us personally. The utterance of this moral feeling is the utterance of humanity within us. It is an expression of sympathy in the well-being of the race. If it be the faintest sigh of some abused exile among the snows of Siberia; if it be an ancient Briton standing on the last rock where freedom could find a resting-place; if it be an American Indian, looking, for the last time on the grave of his father, just as insatiate avarice is about to drive his plough through it, the feeling within is one and identical. Time and space are overleaped in the twinkling of an eye. Our hearts gather instantly around these despairing wretches. Towards their oppressors, we feel no hate or revenge. But till retribution has been made in some way, till suffering has been felt in some form, it is impossible for us to rest in quietness. The delicate frame-work of our moral being has been deranged. It must be repaired by the infliction of suffering.

Instead of the feeling in question being necessarily sinful, it may on the contrary, be the evidence of a generous sympathy, of a finely educated conscience, and of a character conformed to the great standard of perfection. Not to possess this moral sympathy might indicate a pusillanimous nature, a dulness of spiritual apprehension, and no desire that the disorders in God's kingdom should be rectified.

The connection of this original principle of our nature, which has been briefly developed, with the imprecations in the Psalms and in other parts of the Bible, is obvious. If it does not account for all, it still lies at the foundation of a large portion of them. In other words, these imprecatory passages are justified by a primary and innocent feeling of our nature. Were we placed in the condition of the sacred penmen, we should feel, and properly feel, as they felt. The sight of the shameless cruelty of an Edomitic herdsman, if it did not dictate an imprecatory poem, would unavoidably awaken those feelings on which that poem is founded. The impartial spectator, as he stood on the smoking ashes

of Jerusalem and saw the Idumeans as they stimulated the fierce Chaldeans to "raze" the holy city to its foundations, and heard them suggest new and ingenious methods of cruelty, would join in the emotions which called forth, if he did not in the words which express, the maledictions of the 137th Psalm. Let any right-minded reader look at the lives of Antiochus Epiphanes, of the first Herod, of some of the Roman emperors, of the Fouquier Tinville and Carriers of the French Revolution, and fail, if he can, to rejoice, yea exult, when the same cup is wrung out to them, which they had mingled for others. The feeling in the minds of those who penned the 55th and 69th Psalms was not malice. It was the indignation excited by cruelty and injustice, and the desire that crime should be punished. They, doubtless, followed the precept, Be ye angry, and sin not. If we were acquainted with the circumstances which called forth the imprecatory Psalms, we should, doubtless, find, as the cause or occasion, striking cases of treachery, practised villany and unblushing violations of law.

Our Saviour uttered awful anathemas against the hypocritical Scribes and Pharisees. These were authorized, not simply on the ground, that he knew the hearts of men, and as judge of the world, had a right to anticipate the final sentence, but from the atrocity of their crimes. On account of the reputed sanctity of their characters, they were often made the depositaries for safe keeping of the pittance of widows, or they became guardians of the estates of orphans. These sacred funds, they artfully embezzled and appropriated to their personal use, while the helpless owner sought for redress in vain, because the judge in the case might be the swindler himself. No wonder our Saviour denounced the vengeance of heaven on these sanctimonious thieves and repudiators. His anathemas were sanctioned by a feeling which we have in common with him, and which, on extraordinary occasions, we not only cherish, but express or imply in language. If we had been fully possessed of the facts, and all the attendant circumstances, as he knew them, or as his disciples might, in a degree have known them, we should have seen ample ground for his terrible denunciations.

Our position is, indeed, different, in certain respects, from that of the inspired writers, or of the ancient Jews. The Israelites were authorized by God himself to exterminate some of the tribes by whom they were surrounded. This distinct commission would justify a style of address in respect to these tribes, which would

not be proper in other circumstances. We have no such general commission.

Again, we live under a milder and more spiritual dispensation, and we are taught rather to bear injury uncomplaining, and to refer the taking of vengeance to him to whom it properly belongs. We are never to cherish malice or ill-will. We are in all cases to love our enemies, and forgive those who injure us. These circumstances, however, do not seem to militate against the view which has been taken. There are times now, in great national questions, and when the ends of public justice are to be answered, when the original principle of our nature is innocently and necessarily brought into active operation. Without it, we should look unmoved upon the most stupendous crimes, for no other feature of our moral constitution can be a substitute for this. The danger of its abuse, the fact that it often degenerates into a feeling of malevolence or a desire for private revenge, does not alter its nature, or render the indulgence of it unlawful. It remains a principle implanted in our nature by the Creator himself, as really as pity, or any other emotion.

Had all the angels in heaven persevered in their allegiance to their Maker, *one* power within them had forever slumbered; one susceptibility had remained unawakened. They had never known by actual experience the feeling of joy in seeing the course of justice fulfilled. The angels, who kept their first estate, must have approved the sentence which doomed their companions to those penal fires which they still feel. A new aspect of their moral being thus becomes apparent; a new principle of their original nature is developed; a resource is provided against an exigency which was to happen. A fresh illustration is given of the wisdom of Him, who fearfully and wonderfully framed the angel's nature; so constituting it, that an act of punitive justice, when demanded, would not seem arbitrary, but would be fully justified by every one who should behold the spectacle, or who should suffer in consequence of his deeds.

So, also, with the father of our race. While in paradise, he could hardly be conscious of the powers that were wrapped up within him. All, which he had seen, was clothed in the smile of perfect love; all which he had felt or imagined, was an index of nought but of self-satisfying delight, and of the overflowing divine benignity. But when he was exiled from his happy abode, he had a new experience of the awful wisdom of his Creator. He was

not expelled by arbitrary authority. Those flaming cherubim were not an emblem of gratuitous wrath. In the depths of his being, he felt that it was just. His newly awakened moral instinct justified his expulsion. So when he stood over the lifeless body of his second-born, with emotions such as no other father since has looked upon a dead child, one part of his experience must have been the perception of the divine justice. "In that still form, and closed eye," he might say, "a strange aspect of my being is evolved. I feel within me the workings of a hitherto unknown sensation. I felt at first like imprecating vengeance on the fratricide, but that is past. My own sin is here visible. It was my hand that opened the great flood-gate. Righteous art thou, O Lord, in thy judgments."

Cain, too, we have sometimes wondered that, instead of complaining of the severity of his sentence, he did not imprecate a heavier doom; that he did not desire that the demands of justice should be executed speedily on himself. That he did not so wish, may indicate that he was qualified by the possession of a hardened character, to stand at the head of the long line of murderers.

In thus briefly considering one of the sterner features of our constitution, and some of its practical developments, we cannot but be struck with the morbid type of much of the philanthropy and religion current at the present day. Love degenerates into weakness; compassion becomes itself an object of pity; benevolence is degraded into an indiscriminating instinct. The employment of force is branded as a relic of barbarous times. The exercise of authority is scouted as contrary to the spirit both of the gospel and of an enlightened age. The world must now be controlled by persuasion. It was formerly supposed that law, with its rigorous penalty, was a chief instrument in moral reformations, that it was one of the main elements in the means which God and man must employ in meliorating the state of society.

So, likewise, in respect to religion. In our days, there is such a prominent and reiterated exhibition of the paternal character of God as to endanger, if not destroy its legitimate effect on the character of his intelligent creatures. There is such a protrusion of the promises of the Bible, and such a concealment of its threatenings, as to neutralize the influence of both. Religion is sometimes so divested of its grander and sterner qualities as to fail to secure any respect. It becomes a mere collection of pleasant counsels, an assemblage of sweet recommendations, which it would be very well to observe; instead of presenting, as it does, an alternative

of life or death, an authoritative code of morals, a law with inflexible sanctions, a gospel to be rejected on peril of eternal damnation.

These shallow philanthropists and religionists are as ignorant of the nature of man, as they are of the revelation of God, as little versed in the more imposing features of our constitution, as in the high and solemn themes of Christianity. They have little to do with the deeper wants of our moral being. They do not understand how curious and almost contradictory a piece of workmanship is man. They seem never to have imagined, that he has the closest relations to a moral law, to an atoning Saviour, to a righteous moral Governor, and to an impartial judgment seat.

Equally ignorant are they of the bonds which hold society together. Much of the doctrine, which is industriously promulgated at the present day, tends to form a counterfeit philanthropy, to make men sympathize with the misfortunes of the criminal, rather than with injured virtue, or with public morals, to weaken the arm of the law and reduce government itself into a compact remarkable for nothing but its weakness.

ARTICLE VI.

PATRISTICAL AND EXEGETICAL INVESTIGATION OF THE QUESTION RESPECTING THE REAL BODILY PRESENCE OF CHRIST IN THE ELEMENTS OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

By M. Stuart, Professor in the Theol. Seminary, Andover.

† 1. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

THE readers of the *Bibliotheca Sacra* will probably remember, that in No. III. of that work, during the past year, I published an exegetical essay on 1 Cor. 11: 17—34,—a passage which has special relation to the subject of the Lord's Supper. In that essay I treated, in a very brief manner, of the subject named at the head of this article. I had, at that time, other objects in view besides a discussion of this topic; and, of course, the subject now before us could occupy only a subordinate place. Since the publication of that article in the *Bibliotheca*, circumstances have occurred which seemed to me to render it desirable, that the topic in question