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THE  
BIBLIOTHECA SACRA.

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ARTICLE I.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE BIBLE UPON THE  
HUMAN INTELLECT.

BY PRESIDENT J. E. RANKIN, D.D., LL.D.

“The entrance of thy word giveth light; it giveth understanding to the simple.”—PSALM cxix. 30.

IF God would communicate with man, it must be through some capacity in which man is like God. Vinet says, “It is not by the intellect that two beings touch.” But it is by the intellect that two beings study each other, come to what we call an understanding before they do touch. The possibility of finding God in Nature is on the supposition that God is there thinking. And when the astronomer Kepler speaks of himself as thinking over God’s thoughts after him, this is what he means. The movement of the celestial bodies in elliptic orbits was a thought of God. The epicycles of Ptolemy were not God’s thought, but were a man’s imagination, which Kepler corrected.

The prophet Isaiah asks, “Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counselor hath taught him?” We might answer this question in the words of another sacred writer, “When he prepared the heavens, I was there;

when he set a compass on the face of the deep"; or, coming down to the New Testament, we might say, "All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made." This was the creative fellowship of the Godhead.

Indeed, only to a thinking being could another thinking being reveal himself; and only in a thinking being could a thinking being become incarnate. To thinking beings, a world without a thinking God would be a world of despair. And when we hear the voice, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock," we know it comes accompanied by that other voice, "What think ye of Christ? Whose Son is he?" The Creator knocks at the heart of a being whom he has domed with an intelligence that is godlike; a being capable of understanding his visitor, and why he stands there knocking. And whether in Nature or Revelation, he addresses that being through the intellect: in Nature, in sign-language—as though he were a deaf-mute, as he so often is; in Revelation, in the persuasive words: "Come now, let us reason together." The Great Teacher said this in Palestine, "Consider the lilies of the field." It was an invitation to reason with him, as really as when he agonized in Gethsemane and on Calvary. And the seven words of the Cross were love's last argument. "He reasoned with them out of the Scriptures." "As he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled." In creation or the Scriptures, it is one thinking being addressing another. This is what they both mean, God communicating with man.

It is true, indeed, that out of the mouth of babes and sucklings God has ordained praise. It is true, that, "except a man receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he cannot enter therein." It is true, likewise, that the Christian community has always had a preponderance of women, whose processes of thought are largely intuitive.

Intuition is only logic on the wing! But it is not true that the cause of God is necessarily carried by a mere appeal to the feelings; that Christianity has not her great captains of thought; has not her great siege-guns, with which to batter down the walls of masculine resistance to the truth. And in discussing the influence of the Bible upon the human intellect, my first thought is this:—

I. The Bible directly addresses the intellect; just as the light addresses the lens of the eye, and sound addresses the drum of the ear. The Bible has to do with the intellect: not with the intellect exclusively, but with the intellect first. They are meant for each other. Through the intellect, man gets his first conception of the Being who has made him, and what is that Being's claim upon his attention. The Bible is a book; books are for readers and thinkers. It is the most extraordinary book in all literature. It has the most extraordinary contents. Whatever else it fails to do, it is sure to make a man think. It has done this all over the world. This is why so many persons have been afraid of it, and wanted to keep it out of the hands of the people; have thought it safer to treat it like gunpowder and dynamite: because it makes men think. The Colonial period in American history was a period when, as Edmund Burke says, "almost more copies of Blackstone were sent to America than circulated in Great Britain. There was more reading and thinking on civil affairs to the square foot, than in all the world beside. Thinking on such themes had sent these men to Holland, to America. The Mayflower was a schoolship of thinkers. And from 1620 to 1776 God himself had put the colonists to school on these subjects; and now they were ready to recite. The Sultan, to-day, complains that the Bible makes his Armenian subjects restless. Doubtless. It makes them think. "The bar in America," says Trevelyan of the Colonial period, "was a public service, as well as a

profession. Every patriot was, or thought himself, a lawyer." This verifies the Master's own words, "For I came not to send peace on earth, but a sword."

In literature it is very easy to distinguish the false from the true exactly at this point: Has the book, the document, the amount of thought, the elevation of thought, the reach of thought, which belong to the true? Listen to the talk of the grave-diggers in the play of Hamlet. It is talk on the level of high thinking. Shakespeare's clowns and fools make an appeal to our best intelligence; confront us as thinking beings; challenge us as to what we know, make us exercise our best parts. It is a test of the true against the false. If what purported to be a new play of Shakespeare should be discovered to-day, men would need only to read it, with the taste of Macbeth, of Othello, of King Lear in their mouths, the cadence of Shakespeare in their ears, to determine: Has it the Shakespeare flavor, the Shakespeare ring, the Shakespeare mastery, the Shakespeare atmosphere and horizon; the Shakespeare orbs moving majestically on their eternal pathway in the sky of thought?

The Bible is literature, and as literature it knows how to protect itself. Think of two of the books that are in the Bible—the Epistle to the Romans and the book of Job. It is easy to see how difficult it must be for spurious literature to secure admission into such company. To read some of the pseudo-Gospels or Epistles and then to read the genuine, is like hearing stage-thunder in a theater, and then stepping out under the skies where Jehovah is uttering his voice while the earth trembles. The apocryphal books have got into the same binding with the genuine, but have never succeeded in getting into their society. They have not the intellectual *entrée* there. Peter tried to pass himself off as an indifferent spectator at the trial of his Lord. But his speech betrayed him. As to these

books that pretend to inspiration, their speech betrays them: "God's ways are higher than their ways, and his thoughts than their thoughts." They are full of vanities and imbecilities. To read them is like studying an orrery, which a man turns with a crank, when the arch of blue is open to perusal, and you can almost penetrate to the excellent glory, that received the Saviour back to the bosom of the Father. John Foster says there is more consistency and coherency in the Arabian Nights than in the Hindoo Scriptures.

In 1864, a French skeptic concludes an essay in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* with these words: "One day, the question was started in an assembly, What book, a man, condemned to a lifelong imprisonment and to whom but one book could be allowed, would better take with him into his cell? The company included Catholics, Protestants, philosophers, even materialists, and yet the answer was unanimous. They all agreed that there was but one book suitable to take. And that book was the Bible." Taking the Bible was actually taking into companionship the city of the living God, the general assembly of the church of the firstborn, the Mediator of the new covenant, the Judge of all the earth, and the spirits of just men made perfect; it was inarching his soul beneath the eternities; between the paradise in Eden and in the city of God. The world might move on without him as he died there alone; but through the Bible, upon this mighty tide of God's thinking, to these changeless realities he could link his spirit forever. Many a prisoner has kept his tenure upon life by making a companion of a nibbling mouse, or cherishing the growth of a tiny plant, that had wrought its way through a crevice in the wall: needing only so little of God as that, to save him from madness or from despair.

The Bible is an intellectual book. It sets men to think-

ing, to asking themselves questions, to asking other men questions, to solving intellectual problems. In the Encyclopædia Britannica is an article on Creeds. What are creeds? They are the *I thinks*, the *I believes*, of the generations. They are the results of intellectual processes which the Bible awakens; the results of mental logomachy on the battle-fields of thought. There are great battle-fields of thought, as well as of arms. But, in this article, there is no allusion to an American period, of which Professor Austin Phelps of Andover says, that in it the leading theologians of New England—beginning with the Elder Edwards and ending with Professor Edwards A. Park, who has just passed his ninetieth birthday—have done more in the way of original thinking, for the advance of strictly theological science, than any other equal number of men, within an equal space of time, since the days of Augustine. I know the science of theology is not popular. But Bible theology was the food that made Cromwell's Roundheads great. It was the food of the Scottish Covenanters. It was the food of the Pilgrim Fathers. It was the food of the Colonial period. I do not believe that any human being ever lived who did more careful thinking about the truths of the Bible than did Jonathan Edwards. We call other men, the great. Let us say Jonathan Edwards the Great. For he was furnished by God for great thinking, whether as a naturalist, a mathematician, a metaphysician, a theologian. In Drumtochty, as Ian Maclaren tells us, the intellectual life centered in the weekly sermon. Men thought about Sabbath as they followed the plow, in the caller air; and braced themselves for an effort on the giving out of the text. Then they took their snuff, selected their attitude, and from that moment to the close, they never took eyes off the preacher. It was precisely so in the Colonial periods. The hearer was hypnotized by thought; God's thought, man's thought.

The week rose up to its height, culminated, and receded again. The great event of the week was the sermon. And the sermon was the effort of the preacher to think over the thoughts of God as recorded in the Bible.

I have spoken of Jonathan Edwards. Thomas Chalmers, the great pulpit thinker of Scotland, delighted to call himself his pupil; said he owed to him more than to any other mortal man. And in Scotland and New England, the Bible and the Assembly's Catechism were long the intellectual text-books of the people. Children in the home had more thoughts then about the teaching of the Word of God than do some of the parents, nay, some of the preachers, in the churches now.

People say, "Well, do you think such preaching ever did much good?" It set men to thinking. It set them to thinking about high themes; about what God has said in the Bible. It could not be said of them, that God was not in all their thoughts. He was in all their thoughts. They waked, and God was there. They laid themselves down to sleep, and God was there. And the men and the women who did this kind of thinking were the builders of this American Republic. They made our Constitution. They fought our battles. They felt a prophetic movement, a tide setting toward freedom which inspired them to noble thoughts and noble deeds. The Pilgrims, the Covenanters, and the Huguenots were folk fed upon Bible pabulum; and they constituted the backbone of this Republic. They knew God's secret as to the future of this continent. Senator Lodge in his analysis of the oratory of Daniel Webster, whom he regards worthy of being ranked with the great orators of antiquity, finds this prophetic quality the distinguishing characteristic of his eloquence. "Mr. Webster," says he, "relied chiefly on the sustained appeal to the understanding; and he was a conspicuous example of the prophetic character which Christianity,

and especially Protestantism, has given to modern eloquence." What themes he had: "The Landing at Plymouth," "The Two Orations at Bunker's Hill," "The Death of Adams and Jefferson," every one of them breathing the breath of freedom. And there was prophetic utterance in every one of them.

Some of the masterpieces of literature are in the Bible. Older than Milton, than Virgil, than Dante, than Æschylus, than Homer, and greater than they all, is the book of Job; at once an epic, a drama, a metaphysical and theological treatise. Where did Dante and Milton find their inspiration but in the Bible? The Bible has given the cue to all the great thinkers of modern literature; and it always gives them their climax. It unfolds the great themes of humanity; as these themes break on the shores of eternity.

The historian Prescott says, "It is a fortunate thing for the world that the first poem of modern times should have been founded on a subject growing out of the Christian religion, and written by a man penetrated with the spirit of its sternest creed." He means Dante's "Inferno." It is a fortunate thing for the world, too, that Ralph Waldo Emerson, the Christian Plato, was bred a Christian minister, and was for generations, on the one side or the other or on both, the descendant of Christian ministers. It was a fortunate thing for the world that in his writings Thomas Carlyle never could free himself from the God of his father and mother. And where did Burns get his "Cotter's Saturday Night," and Bryant the grandest passage in the "Thanatopsis," but in the Bible? In his "Parnassus" Emerson makes no quotation from Milton's "Paradise Lost," because, as he says, "It stands on every bookshelf beside the Bible. It belongs there."

II. The Bible stimulates the human intellect by presenting truth in its absolute form. This is the form which

the intellect craves. Emerson says that Plato "domesticates the soul in the sphere of eternal truth, among the great things of God. How much truer this, of the Bible! Plato says, "The intellect is king of heaven and earth." In Christ Jesus, it is the king of the heaven of heavens. It finds the idea of God thinkable: because God's thoughts have been brought to it in the Bible. There is only one Being who can say, "I am the Truth." To know him is not only eternal life, it is the solution of all mysteries, it is to have all knowledge.

That which man calls truth has a large admixture of error, of half-truth. And error is the quartz and sand out of which the nuggets of truth have to be filtered. And thinking is the filtering process. Milton says, "Error is but opinion in the making." When the Greek rushed from the bath with the exclamation, "I have found it!" he illustrated how truth stimulates the intellect; the joy and triumph of finding it. Old things pass away: behold, all things become new. And it matters not whether the truth be physical, moral, spiritual, it comes through the intellect. And when it does come, the thinking man is satisfied. You can make men retract with the lips; but the inner man, the thinking man, can never be moved. Heaven and earth may pass away; but the truth abideth forever. What he thinks to be truth, must be truth to him.

In his "Leviathan," Hobbes says: "No discourse [that is, no argument] whatever can end in absolute knowledge of fact, past or to come. By discourse, man can only know, that if this is, that is; if this has been, that has been; if this shall be, that shall be; which is to know conditionally, on a hypothesis." There is no such presentation of the truth in the Bible. The Bible gives man unconditional knowledge. There is One infallible witness: there is One competent witness. And though the world crucified him between two thieves, that only sealed his testimony for-

ever. "Whom do men say, that I, the Son of man, am?" Some said Elias; some, that prophet; and some, that John the Baptist was risen from the dead. "But whom say ye that I am?" "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God, which should come into the world." The variety of opinion among men then showed that they were neither infallible nor competent witnesses as to the Truth incarnate. It was the same at his trial before the high-priest: "Neither did their witnesses agree together," says St. Mark. But he, who could not deny himself, witnessed a good confession before Pontius Pilate. What did he say? "For this cause came I into the world: that I might bear witness to the truth." When Pilate asked, What is truth? Truth, arrayed in a crown of thorns, confronted him, and he knew Him not.

There is nothing but the truth which can satisfy the intellect. God has made us so. Say that two and two make five, it does not satisfy the intellect. Say that there is no difference between him that serves God, and him who serves him not, it does not satisfy the moral sense; indeed, but neither does it satisfy the intellect. Two and two make four; two and three make five. It sometimes seems in these days that you are sure of nothing, even of your arithmetic. But here is the Author of one book who is sure. Here is one book that affirms unconditionally. Notwithstanding all that a man may say about his free-will and his independence, there is nothing that pleases him better, or stimulates him more, than to encounter One who speaks with authority; as though he had a commission from God and a communication to make. It was a part of the fascination of the Saviour's speech. The mathematics of the skies is perfect and authoritative, when Kepler comes, when Newton comes. But what dreary wastes men called the truth before! Dugald Stewart says, "Descartes stands to psychology as Francis Bacon to Nature;

he is the father of the experimental philosophy of the human mind." This is doubtless true. But recall for a moment this man's argument against gravitation: To conceive this, he says, we must not only suppose that every portion of matter in the universe is animated, and animated by several different souls which do not obstruct one another, but that those souls are intelligent and even divine; that they may know what is going on in the most remote places, without any messenger to give them notice, and that they may exert their powers there." It was one soul, one law he needed; the one Being, in whom all things consist. I have spoken of the imbecility of the pseudo-Gospels. There is no imbecility greater than that of pseudo-science. The Cartesian theory of the universe, which held its ground in Europe for nearly a century, was full of such imbecilities as the above. Hume complains of Lord Bacon because he rejected the Copernican system. But Hallam replies, "If he had accepted it, he would have been a quarter of a century before his generation."

A great many people think that the same uncertainty has attended the truth of the Bible; that theological science has been full of similar vagaries. Let us see how far this is a mistake. The symbol that we call the Apostles' Creed, and which embraces all the fundamental truths of Christianity, we can date back only to about the fifth century. But its substance and almost its form are to be found in the creeds of Irenæus and Tertullian: "Complete faith in one God Almighty, of whom are all things, and in the Son of God, Jesus Christ our Lord, by whom are all things, and his dispensations by which the Son of God became a man; also, a firm trust in the Spirit of God, who hath sent forth the dispensations of the Father and the Son, dwelling in the successive race of men, as the Father willed," is the creed of Irenæus. "The rule of faith is altogether one, irremovable, and irreformable, in believ-

ing in one only God omnipotent, the Maker of the universe, and his Son Jesus Christ, born of the Virgin Mary, crucified under Pontius Pilate, raised again from the dead on the third day, received into the heavens, sitting now at the right hand of the Father, and about to come to judge the quick and the dead, through the resurrection of the flesh as well as of the spirit," is the creed of Tertullian. Irenæus was born A.D. 140, and Tertullian A.D. 160; that is, they were only a little more distant from the Saviour's death than we are from the Declaration of Independence. These creeds cover the main facts of Christianity. Respecting the philosophy of them, respecting things secondary, there has been a vast amount of difference and discussion; some of it puerile, some of it erroneous.

Lord Bacon said, "When man seeth the dependence of causes, and the works of providence, then, according to the allegory of the poets, he will easily believe that the highest link of Nature's chain must needs be tied to the foot of Jupiter's chair." But has this been the fact? At no period of the world has the cosmological argument for the being of God been so strong as it is to-day. From the mollusk to the man, it has been the same; one thing dependent upon another. The doctrine of evolution ought to make it seem impossible that this system of things can exist without a God. For, the more humble the beginnings, and the more complicated and comprehensive the conclusions of the system, the more difficult to believe that this economy, this genesis of things, this vast procession, can travel without an infinite Author. These conclusions at which human science arrives so cautiously and slowly and hesitatingly, the Word of God proclaims with full voice; as an organ with all its stops open: "For by him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions or principalities or powers: all things were created

by him and for him, and he is before all things, and by him all things consist."

I do not think the observation of the facts of Nature necessarily results in making a man a theist. Charles Darwin says that in his boyhood he was fond of poetry, but that the time came when he did not care even for Shakespeare. Just so, too, he once had the orthodox belief in God and in the immortality of the soul. In his journal in the midst of a Brazilian forest, he once wrote: "It is not possible to give an adequate idea of the higher feelings of wonder, admiration, and devotion which fill the mind." But this also he lost. And in 1868 he writes to a friend: "I am glad you were at the oratorio of the Messiah. It is the one thing I should like to hear again; but I daresay I should find my soul too dried up to appreciate it as in the old days. And then I should feel flat: for it is a horrid bore to feel as I constantly do, that I am a withered leaf for every subject but science. It sometimes makes me hate science." Darwin lived seventy-three years, and was the greatest scientist of his generation. This is what science did for him. To the subject of religion, he says he gave very little study; and though he never called himself an atheist, he thought he ought to be classified as an agnostic. There might be a God, but he did not think Nature proved it. He rejected the argument from design.

Charles Kingsley, the novelist and poet, a clergyman who was alive to all the claims of Christian thought as well as Christian activity, who studied Nature with Bible in hand, wrote the great naturalist on the receipt of his treatise on "The Descent of Man": "All I have seen of it awes me; the heap of facts and the prestige of your name, and the clear intuition that if you be right, I must give up much that I have believed and written! But I have gradually learned that it is just as noble a conception of Deity to believe that he created primeval forms capable

of self-development, as to believe that he required a fresh act of intervention to supply the lacunas which he himself had made. I question whether the former be not the loftier thought." This is the manner in which this noble Christian thinker adjusts himself to a new scientific situation. The last had been taught to look at truth as the Bible reveals it; to be accepted and obeyed. And when Nature seemed to say, "This is God's method," he could only answer, "Even so. For so it seemeth good in thy sight." He did not any the less think that science had found the thoughts of God.

The Bible says, "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together, until now." It does not look so on the surface: the flowers by the brook-side, the birds in the trees, the lambs in the fields, the cattle on a thousand hills—as Milton sings in "L'Allegro,"

"Russet lawns and fallows grey,  
Where the nibbling flocks do stray:  
Mountains, on whose barren breast  
The lab'ring clouds do often rest,  
Meadows trim with daisies pied,  
Shallow brooks and rivers wide"—

seem to speak a different language,—the language of peace and joy. But, as a matter of fact, there is no peace in Nature. Nature has no such evangel. The warfare in nature is perpetual; earthquakes, tempests, storms on land and deep, animals arrayed against animals, plants against plants, insects destroying trees, living upon each other. Warfare and death everywhere. And this is the testimony of all science. The very doctrine of the survival of the fittest is a doctrine of the strong overpowering the weak; Nature moving in epicycles of bloodshed toward what? Natural Science needs a Mediator, as much as Theological. The prophetic word, "Then shall the wolf dwell with the lamb, and the leopard lie down with the kid, and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together";

when, out of Christ Jesus, shall this be fulfilled? When shall be Nature's armistice? What arbitration shall there be, except that on Calvary? For Nature herself must learn this sentence: "As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive." It is the new race in Christ Jesus that is to meet the earnest expectation of the creature. Nature herself is waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God. She has no panacea for her own troubles, no solution of them.

III. The Bible brings absolute truth to bear on the intellect with reference to conduct. It thus keeps the balance between the abstract and the concrete; it always reminds man that his nature and mission are twofold; that he is in a world where thinking for its own sake, whether it be about Nature or Religion, is at a discount. This is the only wholesome method of thinking; with work in hand, doing truth as well as believing it. "Action alone," says Vinet, "gives the true measure of things. It is *on foot*, not by the eye, that we measure distance."

The greatest metaphysical thinker, the greatest theologian of the Bible—greater than Augustine, than Calvin, than Edwards—is at the same time what we should call the most active Christian worker. This is not all. Lest he should still lose his balance, he supports himself by the work of his own hands; making tents for a living.

In his autobiography, the naturalist Darwin again says: "As for myself, I believe I have acted rightly in steadily following and devoting my life to science. I feel no remorse from having committed any great sin; but I have often regretted that I have not done more direct good to my fellow-creatures." In work for man he would have kept his balance. Hermit-thinkers, who eschew the battle of life, run this risk; becoming one-sided: an atrophy passes over some portion of their nature; it becomes paralyzed. David Livingstone used to carry about him a

pocket edition of Burns. In the voyage on the Beagle, embracing two years of absence from home, Darwin says of himself: "As I was not able to work all day at science, I read a great deal on various subjects, including some metaphysical books. About this time, I took much delight in Wordsworth's and Coleridge's poetry, and can boast that I read 'The Excursion' twice through. Formerly Milton's 'Paradise Lost' had been my chief favorite, and in my excursions during the voyage of the Beagle, when I could take only a single volume, I chose Milton." As has been intimated, this æsthetic taste, and indeed all kindred ones, at length died out. It was because his studies dissociated him from man and from life. What an awful experience also was that of the great political economist, Stuart Mill, when he discovered that even if all that which he wanted men to believe, and meant to make them believe, should be received by them, he would not be satisfied! Then his knees became weak and his hands hung down. It was the stretching of his infinite nature upon the dead body of a finite science. In one sense, there is more elevation in the study of great social, economic, and moral questions as they relate to the human race, than in the study of coral-reefs, fan-tails and pouters. But the isolation and absorption are the same. Darwin came to say, "It is really a great evil, that from habit I have pleasure in hardly anything except Natural History; for nothing else makes me forget my ever-recurrent, uncomfortable sensations." And Stuart Mill's remedy for the depression that overtook him, he found to be reading Wordsworth, and seeking the living companionship of his fellow-mortals; in breaking away from the cold stoicism and reserve in which his father had brought him up, and finding some beings to love and help: in other words, in conduct; in science as applied thinking; thinking that has passed into life.

The thoughts which the Bible engenders are thoughts which lead to personal activity. Far be it from me to criticise the pursuits of great naturalists. But the Apostle says, "Whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away." The motion of a bicycle keeps it erect. Man must move in order to do safe thinking. Even such pursuits need to be sanctified by the Word of God and prayer. The only manner in which thinking can have its highest dignity and highest usefulness, can be wholly worthy of man, made in God's image, can be really safe for a finite being, is on the principle, "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." If that is a man's calling of God, he can just as really find God in the laboratory, as in the pulpit; and God may as really speak to him in some scientific discovery as he spoke to Moses in the burning bush. But he must take his shoes off his feet, as Moses did, and stand reverent before it.

Pascal says, "Man has a secret instinct that leads him to seek diversion from without; which springs from the sense of his continual misery. That is man as he is by nature. The new man does not require diversion but occupation. God requires it of him. Our Elder Brother has said, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." Hal- lam says, "The satellites of Jupiter and the phases of Venus are not as glorious in the 'scutcheon of Galileo, as his discovery of the true principles of mechanics." There he touched the earth. There he touched man. And Galileo tells us that he wrote his treatise on this subject "because he had seen the fruitless attempts of engineers to raise weights of small force; as if with their machines they could cheat nature." It was a contribution to humanity. The Bible lays hold of men just where they happen to be, and plunges them into service. "Wherefore," says the Apostle Paul, "I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision." "Wherefore, I conferred not with flesh and blood."

He found out what God had for him to do. Thus it was that he made the whole known world feel the power of his presence. He, the logician, the metaphysician, the theologian, put the gospel that he preached, into his life. If he had not thought God's thoughts, he would have done nothing. If he had done nothing his thinking alone would have led him into darkness. His high thinking about predestination and foreknowledge and election and redemption did not hurt him one particle. For he lived among men; he earned his daily bread. It was applied Christianity,—this life of his. He studied these subjects practically. This often led him into great straits. It exposed him to great dangers. "For he thus judged that if One died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they who live should not live henceforth unto themselves, but unto him who died for them and rose again"; that he was created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God had before ordained that he should walk in them; that he was debtor to Jew and Greek, to bond and free." And he was just as great descending a city wall in a basket, as standing before Cæsar.

Speculative religious thinking, alone is not profitable. After you have looked at the mighty intellectual achievements of Jonathan Edwards as his published works illustrate them, remember that the way in which he held the great truths he taught, led him to take the dying Indian missionary Brainerd into his own home in Northampton, to nurse him as a son, himself to record his dying experiences, and utter the last words over his dust; led him to devote seven years of his own marvelous intellectual life to the same missionary work among the Indians on the banks of the Housatonic; led him to such a life of practical godliness, that to call him saintly is no exaggeration. The time never will come in the history of this nation

when through his thinking and the thinking of his descendants, his influence will cease to be felt.

In the Colonial period, men's minds were occupied with the greatest political themes ever discussed. Their fathers had discussed theology and they discussed civics. But they discussed in pine meeting-houses, built by thinkers, who held an ax in one hand and a gun in the other. The poet says, "They builded better than they knew." But, if they had not put their thoughts into the act, they would never have known how to build at all. The log school-house and church, the newspaper, the town meeting kept their souls all on fire; and they wrought on, whether it led them to honor or dishonor, to success or martyrdom; and their working made safe their thinking. This is the secret of John Adams and Thomas Jefferson; men who thought themselves to heroic deeds and great institutions.

IV. The Bible stimulates the human intellect by presenting the life of every man as under moral obligation. A large part of the highest and best thinking of the world has been done by men whom the Christian idea has seized and inspired. The blind Milton speaks of doing his work under the eye of his great taskmaster. This taskmaster, God, is not One who expects bricks without furnishing straw; for he is a faithful Creator. But he expects bricks.

The great universities of the world have been founded for the promotion of the study of the revelations which God has made of himself, the divinities and humanities. "The languages are the scabbard in which the sword of the Spirit is hidden." This was Luther's plea for Hebrew and Greek. It is as good as ever. It was a poor Congregational minister of New England who, dying, gave his money for Harvard University; as much again as the Colony had given. It was a company of ministers of the same denomination who founded Yale, bringing some of their own books for a library. Princeton had a similar

birth. It was born of the prayers of Jonathan Edwards and his son-in-law. There are to-day between four and five hundred larger colleges and universities in the country. There is scarcely ten of them which had not a professedly Christian origin; did not come from intellect stirred by the Bible. And, so far as I know, there is not a single one of them whose aims are unchristian. I never knew of an infidel college or university. Infidels get hold of schools founded by Christian funds. They steal the livery of heaven.

The instrument of intellectual culture is literature. And it is a wonderful providence which has not only put the best literature of the world into the Bible, but has given a Christian type to nearly every great writer of English literature. The few poetical writers, which men are bound to read till the end of time, have thus been retained on the side of Christianity. The canon is closed. No more Shakespeares, no more Miltons. Browning and Tennyson too are Christian. Pindar in his odes celebrated the victors in the Olympic games; but what were the Olympic games to the Colosseum full of Christian martyrs? We are taught that we ourselves are compassed about with a far greater cloud of witnesses than ever inspired the participants in such a contest as those in that vast amphitheater; God and Heaven are spectators. Homer said the heroes that met and fought around the walls of Troy were fighting the battle of the gods. But Milton has shown us far more important battle-fields than they were; and Bunyan has shown us one in our own souls. We read of the greatness of Athens and Rome; the modern world has its great cities too. But greater than these is the New Jerusalem, that comes down out of heaven from God; of which we may all be citizens, if we will be naturalized at the Cross. Each generation has its great human characters. None are greater than the names enrolled in the Lamb's

Book of Life; and the kings of the earth shall bring their glory and honor to the city of the great King.

There are not less than one hundred and fifty thousand students in our higher schools, colleges, and universities. They are largely there from a sense of duty to their day and generation. It has been said to them in the silence of their soul, "Who will go for me?" There are some exceptions, to be sure. But as a rule it is true, that duty stimulates them to study. If they are Christians we are sure of it. They are coming forth in their turn, to do thinking, to put thought into act, to crown the work of previous generations. And there is a woe upon them if they do it not.

V. By stimulating the intellect to thought with reference to conduct, the Bible makes a man, the man of his own period; keeps him in his own generation, where alone he can do anything, whether for man or for God.

The best justification of the theological thought of the last three centuries are the thinkers who have illustrated its meaning. They have all been creators. Says Principal Fairbairn in his "City of God," "Calvinism was a system of splendid doing, of courageous consistency in all its parts; a reasoned system; and the reason that understood it, it had under control. It was the universe in its making, in its rule, in its purpose and destiny, explained by the conception of God; and though the conception might not be the most generous, the men who held it felt as if they had their feet upon the last and highest reality; as if they had not simply a way of salvation, or a path of peace in death, but a system of absolute truth that helped a man to look at all things as if it were from the standpoint of their Creator. And a faith so strong and comprehensive made strong and commanding men. It entered like iron into their blood, and braced it for the most heroic endurances and endeavors. It made the men who in France

fought the noble battles of the Huguenots; the soldiers and citizens who in the swamp of Holland resisted and broke the cruel and tyrannical power of Spain; the Puritans who in England and the forests of the far West formed all that was, and is, bravest, brainiest, manliest, in our religious life; the Covenanters who in Scotland through years of persecution held aloft and nobly followed the blue banner that proclaimed the sovereign rights of Christ."

Goethe says, "Duty is the demand of the passing hour." The Bible says so. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling: for it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure." Yesterday has no duty for me. I am done with it. To-morrow has none: I may never see it. Only to-day. How can a man know his duty to-day, unless he will adjust himself to his present environment, where God has put him, and hear the voice that speaks to him from it? His environment is here. No other man ever had one precisely like it. God is here in his own Book, interpreted by his own Spirit, who gives every man wisdom, according as he will ask it; gives it liberally, without upbraiding. A man cannot do the thing that God expects, unless he will allow the Bible to stir him to thought here and now; to thought that embodies itself in action.

Natural religion exists only in the material world and to the mind of him who studies it. Of supernatural religion, we may say: It is in this Book, and in the lives of thinking men and women, whom this book stirs to thought and duty; who in their day and generation undertake by its light to grapple with the great practical problems which confront them. Thinking without action perplexes them, staggers them: makes them either fatalists or pessimists. Thinking with action makes them courageous and strong. They are like the soldier in battle. They only know that

the conflict of their age is upon them and they report for duty. The trumpet-call dissipates all their empty speculations. Action clarifies all, explains all, harmonizes all.

The poet Milton would not prolong his stay in Greece to visit the Acropolis because, he said, "it would be dishonorable to be lingering abroad, even for the improvement of his mind, when his fellow-citizens were contending for liberty at home." There was culture versus duty. In the same spirit two missionaries of the American Board during the Civil War found themselves face to face as chaplains, in the trenches about Atlanta. The call of their Mother was so loud they could not resist it. They felt, with Webster, "This lovely land, this glorious liberty, these benign institutions, the dear purchase of our fathers, are ours; ours to enjoy, ours to preserve, ours to transmit." And so they reported here for duty. If the hope of the world was threatened, they wished to be there to save it; and so, unknown to each other, they came, neighbors at home in Turkey, and neighbors again under the banner of their native land.

It is said of Moses, that, "having served his generation according to the will of God, he fell asleep." That means that God's Word stirs up men to do something which is applicable to them in their own period, which they can do, and which perhaps no one else ever would do. "His generation, according to the will of God." For men who do the will of God, there is always a future. God's will is always germinating. If they will work with God, God will give them work to do. Moses had a beginning which was very discouraging. "Wilt thou slay me, as thou didst the Egyptian?" Was Moses ever reproved by God for that? It sent him out of the country. Forty years he kept the sheep of Jethro, his father-in-law, in that very wilderness where God was to make him the shepherd of his people, when he made them go forth like sheep and guided them

in the wilderness like a flock. And then, how he drew back from his commission: "O Lord, my God, I am not eloquent, neither, heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant. But I am slow of speech and of a slow tongue." This was what he said, this man who was to divide the seas, to cleave the rocks so that water should burst forth, to feed that multitude with manna from heaven; who was to mold those delivered bondmen into such a people as God could use to prepare the way for the kingdom of his dear Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. It was this service of Moses to his generation that made the people of God great in the earth. In them, he put to trial the jurisprudence of the world. Recall the grand simplicity of the Bible history of first things: where a single phrase opens golden-hinged portals that show us the Paradise of Eden; gives us a glimpse of man there in God's image; where a few paragraphs string upon their thread the great facts and events which have always attracted the human mind as a magnet: God, Creation, Man in God's Society, the Apostasy from God, the Promise of Redemption. Then arises that solitary figure, Abraham, moving with a dignity and majesty his own, the friend of God, the entertainer of angels, the prophet with a glimpse of Calvary. And then begins the new act in the drama: God beckoning man back to himself; the encounter of the redemptive purpose and civilization in Egypt: the great Lawgiver Moses, having stolen Egypt's wisdom, for himself and God's people; amid portents and wonders, leading forth his army of men and women and children to be a people separated to Jehovah. Then comes the heroic period: the period of Gideon, and Barak, and Samson; then the transition from nomadic to agricultural life. Then arise the kings, moving in succession across the stage: Saul and David and Solomon, that wear upon their brows the round and top of sovereignty, and then the two diverging lines of Israel and Ju-

dah, in all their competitions and contentions. Then Jerusalem besieged by people that know not God, and yet who are fulfilling the Hebrew prophecies. Then, the seventy years' captivity; the only captivity of a nation that ever came back to their native land. Then the return, like the captivity, under the auspices of a Gentile king. Then the long break of the prophetic series. Then, in the fullness of time, Christ comes, incarnate God; the great Prophet, Priest, Sacrifice: in him all things complete. Then the Gospels and the Epistles; and the book of Revelation, in which the mighty angel stands, rainbow crowned, and swears that Time shall be no longer. Then comes the New Jerusalem, adorned as a bride, and the Second Paradise!

The bare enumeration of the themes is itself history, poetry, logic, all in one. Yes, take the One Book. As the poet makes Ophelia say of the pansy, "It's for thought." It is the one book that awakens thought, and stimulates thought, and satisfies thought. For it brings us where we must all come, or be restless forever. It brings us to the foot of the Cross; to the great harmony-climax of Nature and Revelation; to the hymn of the ten thousand times ten thousands and thousands of thousands: "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing"; and to that response of every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them: "Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever."