

world is loveliest to him, who looks out on it through pure eyes.

Sweet is the pleasure,
Itself cannot spoil!
Is not true leisure
One with true toil?

Thou that wouldst taste it,
Still do thy best;
Use it, not waste it,
Else 't is no rest.

Wouldst behold beauty
Near thee? all round?
Only hath duty
Such a sight found.

Rest is not quitting
The busy career;
Rest is the fitting
Of self to its sphere.

'T is the brook's motion,
Clear without strife,
Fleeing to ocean
After its life.

Deeper devotion
Nowhere hath knelt;
Fuller emotion
Heart never felt.

'T is loving and serving
The Highest and Best!
'T is ONWARDS! unswerving,
And that is true rest.

D.

BROWNSON'S WRITINGS.*

THIS work is the production of a writer, whose native force of mind, combined with rare philosophical attainments, has elevated him to a prominent rank among the

*Charles Elwood; or the Infidel Converted. By O. A. BROWNSON. Boston: Charles C. Little and James Brown. 1840.

living authors of this country. His history, so far as it is known to us, presents a cheering example of the influence of our institutions to bring forward the man rather than the scholar, to do justice to the sincere expression of a human voice, while the foppery of learning meets with nothing but contempt. Mr. Brownson, we understand, is under no obligations to the culture of the schools; his early life was passed in scenes foreign to the pursuits of literature; he was not led to authorship by the desire of professional reputation; but the various writings, which he has given to the public, are the fruit of a mind filled with earnest convictions that must needs be spoken out.

The great mass of scholars are impelled by no passion for truth; they are content to clothe the current thoughts of the day in elegant forms; they value ideas, as the materials for composition, rather than as the springs of the most real life; their lonely vigils are for the acquisition of knowledge, or the establishment of fame; while the intense desire to pierce into the mysteries of the universe, to comprehend the purposes of God and the destiny of man, is a stranger to their souls. They will never "outwatch the Bear to unsphere the spirit of Plato;" nor wrestle till day-break to obtain a benediction from the angel of truth. Hence their productions, though polished and classical, do not satisfy the common mind; the true secret of vitality is wanting; and though they may gratify our taste, they do not aid our aspirations.

There is a small class of scholars whose aims and pursuits are of a different character. They value literature not as an end, but as an instrument to help the solution of problems, that haunt and agitate the soul. They wish to look into the truth of things. The Universe, in its mysterious and terrible grandeur, has acted on them. Life is not regarded by them as a pageant or a dream; it passes before their eye in dread and solemn beauty; thought is stirred up from its lowest depths; they become students of God unconsciously; and secret communion with the divine presence is their preparation for a knowledge of books, and the expression of their own convictions. Their writings, accordingly, whenever they appear, will be alive. They will probably offend or grieve many, who make the state of their own minds the criterion of truth; but, at

the same time, they will be welcomed by others, who find in them the word which they were waiting to hear spoken.

The author of this volume belongs to the latter class. It is evident from all that we have read of his writings, that he is impelled to the work of composition, by the pressure of an inward necessity. He has studied, as is apparent from the rich and varied knowledge which he brings to the illustration of the subjects he treats of, more extensively and profoundly than most persons; but there are no traces of study, for the sake of study; no marks of a cumbersome erudition; he seems to have read what other men have written on questions which had exercised his mind, and to have appropriated to himself whatever was congenial; and hence, though we may observe the influence of eminent foreign writers on his cast of thought and expression, everything has the freshness and fervor of originality.

Mr. Brownson, we believe, was first introduced to the notice of our community by his contributions to the "*Christian Examiner*," the leading organ of the Unitarians in this city. These form a connected series of very striking articles; distinguished for the fearless energy with which they grasp some of the most difficult problems; for the animation and beauty of their style, for the rare power of philosophical analysis which they display; for their fervid love of humanity; and for the precision and clearness with which the systems of other thinkers are interpreted to the comprehension of the general reader. The subjects with which they are concerned are all connected with the higher sphere of thought. They are pervaded by the presence of a common aim. We find in them the elements and germs of most of the productions which the author has since given to the public.

The purposes, in this stage of his progress, which Mr. Brownson has in view, are the vindication of the reality of the religious principle in the nature of man; the existence of an order of sentiments higher than the calculations of the understanding and the deductions of logic; the foundation of morals on the absolute idea of right in opposition to the popular doctrine of expediency; the exposition of a spiritual philosophy; and the connexion of Christianity with the progress of society. These topics are handled with masterly skill; their discussion in the "*Examiner*"

formed a new era in the history of that able *Journal*; and has exerted a strong influence in producing and cherishing the interest which is now so widely felt in the higher questions of philosophy.

Mr. Brownson's next work, entitled "*New Views of Christianity, Society, and the Church*," is one of the most remarkable that has issued from the American press, although it attracted less attention at the time of its publication than it has since received. We are gratified to learn that many readers have been led to its perusal by their interest in the subsequent writings of its author. It is not difficult to account for the small impression which this book at first made upon the public, compared with its genuine merits. The questions which it considers have been more warmly agitated in Europe than in this country. The ideas which it combats have no general prevalence among us; and their refutation could accordingly call forth no very general attention. It is, in fact, an answer to the objections which have been brought against the Christian religion by Henry Heine, and some of the disciples of the St. Simonian school, on account of its being, as they suppose, a system of exclusive and extravagant spiritualism. Christianity, they say, neglects all temporal interests; its kingdom is not of this world; it aims at the supremacy of the spirit, and the crucifixion of the flesh; it is, therefore, not adopted to the interests of man; in the progress of modern civilization it has become obsolete, and must pass away. Mr. Brownson undertakes to meet these views, by pointing out the true character of Christianity, as it existed in the idea of Jesus; the corruptions which it has experienced in the course of ages; and the symptoms of the return of the Church to the conception of its founder.

The Christianity of the Church, according to this book, is a different thing from the Christianity of Christ. The idea of Jesus was the type of the most perfect religious institution to which the human race will probably ever attain. This idea announces, in opposition to the contending Spiritualism and Materialism, which at that time had their exclusive representatives, that there is no original and essential antithesis between God and man; that neither spirit nor matter is unholy in its nature; that all things, spirit and matter, God and man, soul and body, heaven and

earth, time and eternity, with all their duties and interests, are in themselves holy. It writes holiness to the Lord upon everything, and sums up its sublime teaching in that grand synthesis, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and mind and soul and strength, and thy neighbor as thyself."

But the Church failed to embody this idea; it misapprehended the conditions on which it was to be realized. Instead of understanding Jesus to assert the holiness of both spirit and matter, it understood him to admit that matter was rightfully cursed, and to predicate holiness of spirit alone. It took its stand with spiritualism, and condemned itself to the evils of being exclusive. This fact explains the doctrines, the ceremonies, and the assumptions, exhibited by the Church, in opposition to Christ. It abused and degraded matter, but could not annihilate it. It existed in spite of the Church. It increased in power, and at length rose against spiritualism and demanded the restoration of its rights. This rebellion is Protestantism. But, properly speaking, Protestantism finished its work, and expired in the French Revolution at the close of the last century. Since then there has been a reaction in favor of Spiritualism.

This reaction was favored by the disastrous catastrophe of the movement in France. In consequence of this, men again despaired of the earth; and when they despair of the earth, they always take refuge in heaven. They had trusted materialism too far; they would now not trust it at all. They turned back and sighed for the serene past, the quiet and order of old times, for the mystic land of India, where the soul may dissolve in ecstasy and dream of no change. When the sigh had just escaped, that mystic land reappeared. The old literature and philosophy of India were brought to light. The influence of the ancient Braminical or spiritual word is visible everywhere. It is remarkable in our poets. It moulds the form in Byron, penetrates to the ground in Wordsworth, and entirely predominates in the Schlegels. It acts with equal power on philosophy, religion, society.

What, then, is the mission of the present? The East has reappeared, and spiritualism revives; will it again become supreme? This, according to our author, is out of the question. We of the present century must either dis-

pense with all religious instructions, reproduce spiritualism or materialism, or we must build a new church, organize a new institution, free from the imperfections of those which have been. The first is impossible. Men cannot live in perpetual anarchy. They must and will embody their ideas of the true, the beautiful, the good,—the holy, in some institution. Neither can an exclusive spiritualism or materialism be reproduced. This were an anomaly in the history of humanity; for humanity does not traverse an eternal circle; it advances, in one endless career of progress towards the Infinite, the Perfect. But spiritualism and materialism both have their foundation in our nature, and both will exist and exert their influence. Shall they exist as antagonist principles? Is the bosom of Humanity to be eternally torn by these two contending factions? This cannot be. The war must end. Peace must made.

Here then is the mission of the present. We are to reconcile spirit and matter; that is, we must realize the atonement. Nothing else remains for us to do. Stand still we cannot. To go back is equally impossible. We must go forward; but we can take not a step forward, but on the condition of uniting these two hitherto hostile principles. Progress is our law, and our first step is union.

The union of spirit and matter was the result contemplated by the mission of Jesus. The Church attempted it, but only partially succeeded, and has therefore died. The time had not come for the complete union. Jesus saw this. He knew that the age in which he lived would not be able to realize his conception. Hence he spoke of his second coming. This will take place, when the idea which he represents shall be fully realized. That idea will be realized by a combination of the two terms, which have received thus far from the Church only a separate development. The doctrine which shall realize the idea of the atonement is, that all things are essentially holy, that everything is cleansed, and that we must call nothing common or unclean. Neither spiritualism nor materialism was aware of this truth. Spiritualism saw good only in pure spirit. God was pure spirit, and therefore good. Our good consisted in resemblance to God, that is, in being as like pure spirit as possible. Our duty was to get rid of matter. All the interests of the material order were sinful.

Materialism, on the other hand, had no recognition of spirit. It considered all time and thought and labor bestowed on that which transcends this world as worse than thrown away. It had no conception of inward communion with God. It counted fears of punishment or hopes of reward in a world to come mere idle fancies, fit only to amuse or control the vulgar. It laughed at spiritual joys and griefs, and treated as serious affairs only the pleasures and pains of sense.

The doctrine of the Atonement reconciles these two warring systems. This doctrine teaches us that spirit is real and holy, that matter is real and holy, that God is holy, and that man is holy, that spiritual joys and griefs, and the pleasures and pains of sense, are alike real joys and griefs, real pleasures and pains, and in their places are alike sacred. Spirit and matter, then, are sacred. The influence of this doctrine cannot fail to be very great. It will correct our estimate of man, of the world, of religion, and of God, and remodel all our institutions. It must, in fact, create a new civilization as much in advance of ours, as ours is in advance of that which obtained in the Roman Empire in the time of Jesus. We shall cease to regard man as the antithesis of good. The slave will become a son. Human nature will be clothed with a high and commanding worth. It will be seen to be a lofty and deathless nature. It will be felt to be divine, and infinite will be found traced in living characters on all its faculties. Man will reverence man. Slavery will cease. Wars will fail. Education will destroy the empire of ignorance. Civil freedom will become universal. It will be everywhere felt that one man has no right over another, which that other has not over him. All will be seen to be brothers and equals in the sight of their common Father. Religion will not stop with the command to obey the laws, but it will bid us make just laws, such laws as befit a being divinely endowed like man. Industry will be holy. The cultivation of the earth will be the worship of God. Working men will be priests, and as priests they will be revered, and as priests they will reverence themselves, and feel that they must maintain themselves undefiled. The earth itself and the animals which inhabit it will be counted sacred. We shall study in them the

manifestation of God's wisdom, goodness, and power, and be careful that we make of them none but a holy use. Man's body will be deemed holy. It will be called the temple of the Living God. As a temple, it must not be desecrated. Men will beware of defiling it by sin, by any excessive or improper indulgence, as they would of defiling the temple or the altar consecrated to the service of God. Every duty, every act necessary to be done, every implement of industry, or thing contributing to human use or convenience, will be treated as holy. Religious worship will not be the mere service of the sanctuary. The universe will be God's temple, and its service will be the doing of good to mankind, relieving suffering, and promoting joy, virtue, and well-being. When all this takes place, the glory of the Lord will be manifested unto the ends of the earth, and all flesh will see it and rejoice together. The time is yet distant before this will be fully realized. But we assert the doctrine as an idea; and ideas, if true, are omnipotent. As soon as humanity fully possesses this idea, it will lose no time in reducing it to practice. Men will conform their practice to it. They will become personally holy. Holiness will be written on all their thoughts, emotions, and actions, on their whole lives. And then will Christ really be formed within, the hope of glory. He will be truly incarnated in universal humanity, and God and man will be one.

The tones of a sincere voice are heard in the conclusion of the volume, a part of which we copy.

"Here I must close. I have uttered the words UNION and PROGRESS as the authentic creed of the New Church, as designating the whole duty of man. Would they had been spoken in a clearer, a louder, and a sweeter voice, that a response might be heard from the universal heart of Humanity. But I have spoken as I could, and from a motive which I shall not blush to own either to myself or to Him to whom all must render an account of all their thoughts, words, and deeds. I once had no faith in Him, and I was to myself 'a child without a sire.' I was alone in the world, my heart found no companionship, and my affections withered and died. But I have found Him, and He is my Father, and mankind are my brothers, and I can love and reverence.

"Mankind are my brothers,—they are brothers to one another. I would see them no longer mutually estranged. I labor to bring them together, and to make them feel and own that they are all made of one blood. Let them feel and own this, and they will love one another; they will be kindly affectioned one to another, and 'the groans of this nether world will cease;' the spectacle of wrongs and outrages

oppress our sight no more; tears be wiped from all eyes, and Humanity pass from death to life, to life immortal, to the life of God, for God is love.

"And this result, for which the wise and the good everywhere yearn and labor, will be obtained. I do not misread the age. I have not looked upon the world only out from the window of my closet; I have mingled in its busy scenes; I have rejoiced and wept with it; I have hoped and feared, and believed and doubted with it, and I am but what it has made me. I cannot misread it. It craves union. The heart of man is crying out for the heart of man. One and the same spirit is abroad, uttering the same voice in all languages. From all parts of the world voice answers to voice, and man responds to man. There is a universal language already in use. Men are beginning to understand one another, and their mutual understanding will beget mutual sympathy, and mutual sympathy will bind them together and to God."—pp. 113-115.

Such is a very slight sketch of a work which we have called one of the most remarkable that has appeared in the literature of this country. It labors under the defect, however, of an excessive brevity; some of its most important statements are hints rather than details; and the condensed, aphoristic style of its composition may blind many readers to the fulness of thought which it presents, and the true logical sequence in which it is arranged. In spite of this obstacle to popular success, this work cannot fail to act with great power on all minds of true insight. Its profound significance will be apprehended by many, who find here the expression of their own convictions, the result of their own strivings, which they have never before seen embodied in words. And it has already formed a conspicuous era in the mental history of more than one, who is seeking for the truth of things, in the midst of painted, conventional forms.

Since the publication of this work, Mr. Brownson has gained a more numerous audience and a wider reputation by the establishment of the "Boston Quarterly Review." This Journal stands alone in the history of periodical works. It was undertaken by a single individual, without the coöperation of friends, with no external patronage, supported by no sectarian interests, and called for by no motive but the inward promptings of the author's own soul. A large proportion of its pages, — and it has now reached the middle of its third year, — is from the pen of Mr. Brownson himself. The variety of subjects which it discusses is no less striking, than the vigor and boldness

with which they are treated. The best indication of the culture of philosophy in this country, and the application of its speculative results to the theory of religion, the criticism of literary productions, and the institutions of society, we presume no one will dispute, is to be found in the discussions of this Journal. Nor is it to be regarded as a work of merely ephemeral interest. It is conspicuous among the significant products which are now everywhere called forth by the struggle between the old and the new, between prescription and principle, between the assertions of authority and the suggestions of reason. The vigorous tone of argument which it sustains, its freedom from conventional usage, its fearless vindication of the rights of humanity, the singular charms and force with which it exhibits the results of philosophical research, and the depth and fervor of its religious spirit, are adapted to give it a permanent influence, even among those who dissent widely from many of its conclusions, and to redeem it from the oblivion to which so large a part of our current literature is destined.

The work, which we have made the occasion of the present notice, "Charles Elwood; or the Infidel Converted," is, we think, on the whole, in point of literary finish, superior to any of Mr. Brownson's former writings. It is suited to be more generally popular. It presents the most profound ideas in a simple and attractive form. The discussion of first principles, which in their primitive abstraction are so repulsive to most minds, is carried on through the medium of a slight fiction, with considerable dramatic effect. We become interested in the final opinions of the subjects of the tale, as we do in the catastrophe of a romance. A slender thread of narrative is made to sustain the most weighty arguments on the philosophy of religion; but the conduct both of the story and of the discussion is managed with so much skill, that they serve to relieve and forward each other.

Charles Elwood, who tells his own story, is introduced to us as a young man who has attained the reputation of an infidel in his native village. This subjected him to the usual fate of those who call in question received opinions. His good name suffered on account of his dissent from the prevailing belief; his company was shunned; and though his character was spotless, his sympathies with his kind

deep and sensitive, and his love of truth sincere, he became the object of general aversion and terror.

He is surprised one morning by a visit from Mr. Smith, a young and zealous clergyman, fresh from the theological school, and burning with all the ardor to make proselytes that could be inspired by a creed, which denied the possibility of salvation to any who doubted it. He had heard that Elwood was an atheist; he had stepped in to convert him to Christianity. As he had never measured himself with an intelligent unbeliever, he counted on a speedy victory; but his confidence was greater than his discretion.

"'I have called on you, Mr. Elwood,' said Mr. Smith, after a few common-place remarks, 'with a message from God.'

"'Indeed!' said I: 'And when, sir, did you receive it?'

"'Last night. When you left the meeting without taking your place on the anxious seats, God told me to come and deliver you a message.'

"'Are you certain it was God?'

"'I am.'

"'And how will you make me certain?'

"'Do you think I would tell you a falsehood?'

"'Perhaps not, intentionally; but what evidence have I that you are not yourself deceived?'

"'I feel certain, and do I not know what I feel?'

"'Doubtless, what you feel; but how do you know that your feeling is worthy of trust?'

"'Could not God give me, when he spoke to me, sufficient evidence that it was really He who spoke to me?'

"'Of that you are probably the best judge. But admit that he could give it, and has actually given it; still you alone have it, not I. If then you come to me with the authority of God to vouch for the trustworthiness of your feeling, you must be aware that I have not that authority; I have only your word, the word of a man, who, for aught I know, is as fallible as myself. You come to me as an ambassador from God; produce your credentials, and I will listen to your despatches.'

"'My credentials are the Bible.'

"'But, pray, sir, how can a book written many ages ago, by nobody knows whom, be a proof to me that God told you last night to come and deliver me a message this morning?'

"'I bring you just such a message as the Bible dictates.'

"'And what then?'

"'The Bible is the Word of God.'—pp. 12, 13.

But Elwood was not quite so ready to admit this on the authority of the minister. He brings certain objections to the supposition, pursues his spiritual adviser with inconvenient questions, and at last compels him to take refuge in the evidence of miracles. This gives rise to an interesting discussion.

"'But you forget,' replied Mr. Smith, after a short pause, that the communications received by the sacred writers bore the impress of God's seal. God gave them all needed assurance that it was he himself who spoke to them. If then they were honest men, we ought to believe them. That they were honest men, worthy of all credit as speaking by Divine authority, I infer from the fact that they could work miracles.'

"'All that is easily said. Whether God keeps a seal or not is more than I know; but supposing he does, are mortals well enough acquainted with it to recognize it the moment it is presented? How do they know its impress? Has God lodged with them a fac-simile of it?'

"'God told them that it was his seal.'

"'But how did they know it was God who said so? Had they had any previous acquaintance with him? Who introduced him to them, assured them it was verily the Almighty? But this leads us back to where we were a moment ago. I suppose you hold a supernatural revelation from God to be necessary?'

"'Certainly.'

"'And without a supernatural revelation we can know nothing of God?'

"'Nothing.'

"'Deprive us of the Bible and we should be in total ignorance of God?'

"'Assuredly.'

"'It is necessary to prove that the revelation said to be from God is actually from him?'

"'Undoubtedly.'

"'The revelation is proved to be from God by the miracles performed by the men who profess to speak by Divine authority?'

"'Yes.'

"'Miracles prove this, because they are performed by the power of God, and because God will not confer the power of working miracles on wicked men, or men who will tell lies?'

"'So I believe.'

"'It requires some knowledge of God to be able to say of any given act that it is performed by God. We say of what you term a miracle, that it is wrought by the Almighty, because we seem to ourselves to detect his presence in it. Now if we were totally unacquainted with his presence, should we be able to detect it? It therefore requires some knowledge of God to be able to assert that what is termed a miracle is actually effected by Divine power. Also it requires some knowledge of God to be able to affirm that he will give the power of working miracles to good men only. You start at the idea that he would give this power to wicked men, because to do so would be inconsistent with the character you believe him to possess. In saying that he will not do it, you assume to be acquainted with his character; and from your assumed acquaintance with his character, you infer what he will or will not do. In both of these instances, no inconsiderable knowledge of God is presupposed. Whence do we obtain this knowledge?'

"'Every body knows enough of God to know when a miracle is performed that it is God who performs it, and to know that God will not give the power of working miracles to bad men.'

“Perhaps so. You at least may know enough to know this. But suppose you were deprived of all the light of revelation, would you know enough of God to know this? Did I not understand you to say that were it not for revelation we should be totally ignorant of God?”

“I said so, and say so still.”

“I presume, sir, that there is a point here which has in part escaped your attention. I have observed that you religious people, in defending miracles, assume to be in possession of all the knowledge of God communicated by the supernatural revelation miracles are brought forward to authenticate. You assume the truth of the revelation, and by that verify your miracles; and then adduce your miracles to authenticate the revelation. But I need not say to you that before you have authenticated your revelation you have no right to use it; and before you can authenticate it, on your own showing, you must verify your miracles—a thing you cannot do without that knowledge of God which you say is to be obtained from the revelation only.”

“I do no such thing.”

“Not intentionally, consciously, I admit. You have not a doubt of the truth of revelation. Your whole intellectual being is penetrated in all directions with its teachings, and you never make in your own mind an abstraction of what you have received from the Bible, and thus ascertain what would be your precise condition where you left to the light of nature. You fall therefore unconsciously into the practice of reasoning in support of your faith from premises which that faith itself supplies, and which would be of no validity if that faith were proved to be false; and are of no validity when reasoning with one who questions it. But, sir, this whole matter of miracles may be cut short. What is a miracle? You must know as much of God and the universe to be able to define a miracle, as a miracle on any supposition can teach you. Therefore miracles are at best useless. Then the evidence of the extraordinary feats you term miracles is not altogether satisfactory. All ancient history, profane as well as sacred, is full of marvellous stories which no sound mind can for one moment entertain. They serve to discredit history. The ancient historian who should fill his history with marvels would by no means be held in so high respect, even by yourself, as one who confined his faith to the simple, the ordinary, the natural. His faith in marvels, omens, oracles, prodigies, you would regard as an impeachment of his judgment. Why not do the same in regard to the Bible historians? You allege miracles as a proof of revelation, when in fact nothing about your revelation, or in it, is more in need of proof than your miracles themselves. Then again, miracles can prove nothing but our ignorance. No event that can be traced to a known cause is ever termed a miracle. A miracle is merely an event which can be traced to no known law of nature. To say an event is miraculous is merely saying that it is an anomaly in our experience, and not provided for in our systems of science. The miraculous events recorded in the Bible may have occurred, for aught I know, but they are of no value as evidences of Christianity.”

“Why not?”

“I supposed I had already shown why not. You cannot know enough of God and the universe to know, in the first place, that what you term miracles are actually wrought by God. For aught you know

to the contrary, there may be thousands of beings superior to man capable of performing them. And in the second place, you can never infer from the fact, that a man opens the eyes of the blind, or restores a dead body to life, that he cannot tell a lie. The fact, that the miracle is performed, does not necessarily involve the truth of the doctrine taught, nor the veracity of the miracle-worker. So far as you or I know, a man may perform what is termed a miracle, and yet be a teacher of false doctrines.”

“But if you should see a man raise a dead body to life, in attestation of his Divine commission, would you not believe him?”

“If your history be correct, there were men who actually saw Jesus raise Lazarus from the dead, and yet neither recognised his claims as the Son of God, nor as a teacher of truth, but went away and took counsel how they might put him to death. Before the raising of a man from the dead could be a sufficient warrant for me to receive any doctrine, I must know positively that no being, not commissioned by God, can raise a dead body to life, or that no being, capable of raising a dead body to life, can possibly tell a falsehood. Now this knowledge I have not, and cannot have.”

“Mr Smith made no reply. He remarked that he had overstaid his time, that an imperious engagement required him to leave me; but he would call upon me again, and continue the discussion—a promise, by-the-by, which he forgot to keep, or which circumstances prevented him from fulfilling.”—pp. 20-26.

We must not omit the comment of the author on this conversation.

“Many years have elapsed since this conversation took place. I have reviewed it often in various and diverse moods of mind, but I have not been able to detect any fallacy in my reasoning. It is true that reasoning, if admitted, goes to show that a revelation from God to man is impossible. If the premises from which both Mr. Smith and I started be correct all supernatural revelation must be given up.

“*They who deny to man all inherent capacity to know God, all immediate perception of spiritual truth, place man out of the condition of ever knowing anything of God.* Man can know only what he has a capacity to know. God, may speak to him, and utter truths which he could not himself have found out, but unless there be in him something which recognises the voice of God, and bears witness for God, it is all in vain. If there be not this something in man, then can man receive no revelation from God. There must be a God within to recognise and vouch for the God who speaks to us from without.

“Now this inherent capacity to recognise God, this power to detect his presence wherever he is, and of course everywhere, I did not admit, and not admitting this my conclusions followed legitimately from my premises.

“Mr. Smith admitted it no more than I did, and therefore could not refute me. Denying this capacity, he admitted nothing by which a supernatural revelation could be authenticated, for it required this capacity to detect the presence of God in the miracles, not less than to detect it in the revelation itself. Not having this capacity, man could have no standard by which to try the revelation alleged to be

from God. This was what I labored to make Mr. Smith comprehend; I demanded of him this standard, the criterion of spiritual truth, the fac-simile of God's seal with which to compare the impress on the despatches sent us in his name; but he could not answer my demand.

"Many able apologists of Christianity fail to perceive the point they must establish in the very outset of this controversy with unbelievers. This point is, that man is endowed with an intelligence that knows God immediately, by intuition. They who deny this may be religious, but only at the expense of their logic. We can rationally and scientifically sustain religion only by recognising the mystic element of human nature, an element, which, though in man, is yet in relation with God, and serves as the mediator between God and man. If we cannot establish the reality of this element, which is sometimes termed the Divine in man, and which though in nature is supernatural, it is in vain to seek for any scientific basis for theology, and unbelief in God is the only conclusion to which we can legitimately come."—pp. 26, 27.

The force of argument, it seems, was not the only power that was brought to bear on the convictions of young Elwood. He is led to talk of his religious views with a beautiful devotee to whom he was engaged to be married in a few weeks. She, of course, is shocked at his unbelief, but is utterly unable to comprehend its character, or to penetrate to its cause. Meantime, she is told by Smith, the clerical fanatic, that her duty to God calls for the sacrifice of her lover.

"The agony which Elizabeth suffered during this whole conversation may be more easily imagined than described. She had lavished upon me all the wealth of her heart. She had loved me with a sincerity and depth of affection, enhanced by the apparently unfriendliness of my condition. Like a true woman she had clung to me the closer for the reason that all else seemed to have abandoned me. It is not woman that leaves us when most we need her presence. I have had my share of adversity, I have suffered from the world more than I care to tell; but I have ever found in woman a kind and succoring spirit. Her love has ever shed a hallowed light along my pathway, cheered me in my darkest hours, and given me ever the courage and the strength to battle with my enemies, and regain the mastery of myself. There are those who speak lightly of woman; I have learned to reverence her as the brightest earthly manifestation of the Divinity.

"Elizabeth had loved me, and in all her visions of the future I of course held a prominent place, and it were a foolish affectation to doubt that I constituted their principal charm. To banish me now, to strike my image from her heart, to break with me the faith she had plighted,—the thought of it was not to be endured. And yet what a mysterious nature is this of ours! The very intensity of her love for me alarmed her conscience. She had been but recently converted, and was still laboring under strong excitement. She had just dedi-

cated herself to God. She must be his and his only. Did she not owe everything to God? Should she not love him with her whole heart, and ought she not to sacrifice everything to him? Was not religion, in its very nature, a sacrifice? Would she not be violating its most solemn injunctions, if she retained anything which she loved more than God? Did she not in fact love me more than him? I was dearer to her than all the world besides; but then would not the sacrifice of me to God be so much the more meritorious? If she retained me would it not be a proof, that she counted one treasure too precious to be surrendered? Was she not commanded to forsake father, mother, sister, brother, for God, to give up everything for God, which should come between her and him, though it should be like plucking out a right eye or cutting off a right hand? Must she not now choose between God and man, between religion and love? She must.

"I mean not to say that this was sound reasoning; but I apprehend that it requires no deep insight into human nature, to be made aware that, in many individuals, religion is a much stronger passion than love, and that in certain states of mind, and if the religious affection takes that turn, the more costly the sacrifice, the more resolute are we to make it. In her calm and rational moments, I do not believe Elizabeth would have come to the conclusion she did; but as she was wrought up to a state of pious exaltation, the idea of being able to achieve so great a victory over herself, as that of sacrificing her love on the altar of religion, operated as a powerful spell on her whole nature, and blinded her to everything else. It almost instantly became as it were a fixed idea, to which everything must henceforth be subordinated. Religion therefore triumphed, and with a martyr-like spirit, she resolved to give me up. Blame her not. If she had not possessed a noble nature, such a sacrifice she had never resolved to make."—pp. 67-70.

The timid girl yields to the command of her priestly adviser, though in discarding Elwood, it is plain, that her own heart is broken. His state of mind, subsequent to this passage, is best described by himself.

"I pass over several months in which nothing, I can bring myself to relate, of much importance occurred. Elizabeth and I met a few times after the interview I have mentioned. She was ever the same pure-minded, affectionate girl; but the view which she had taken of her duty to God, and the struggle which thence ensued between religion and love, surrounded as she was by pious friends, whose zeal for the soul hereafter far outran their knowledge of what would constitute its real well-being here, preyed upon her health, and threatened the worst results. From those results I raise not the veil.

"One tie alone was left me, one alone bound me to my race, and to virtue. My mother, bowed with years and afflictions, still lived, though in a distant part of the country. A letter from a distant relative with whom she resided, informed me that she was very ill, and demanded my presence, as she could not survive many days. I need not say this letter afflicted me. I had not seen my mother for several years; not because I wanted filial affection, but I had rarely been able

to do as I would. Poverty is a stern master, and when combined with talent and ambition, often compels us to seem wanting in most of the better and more amiable affections of our nature. I had always loved and revered my mother; but her image rose before me now as it never had before. It looked mournfully upon me, and in the eloquence of mute sorrow seemed to upbraid me with neglect, and to tell me that I had failed to prove myself a good son.

"I lost no time in complying with my mother's request. I found her still living, but evidently near her last. She recognised me, brightened up a moment, thanked me for coming to see her, thanked her God that he had permitted her to look once more upon the face of her son, her only child, and to God, the God in whom she believed, who had protected her through life, and in whom she had found solace and support under all her trials and sorrows, she commended me, with all the fervor of undoubting piety, and the warmth of maternal love, for time and eternity. The effort exhausted her; she sunk into a sort of lethargy, which in a few hours proved to be the sleep of death.

"I watched by the lifeless body; I followed it to its resting place in the earth; went at twilight and stood by the grave which had closed over it. Do you ask what were my thoughts and feelings?

"I was a disbeliever, but I was a man, and had a heart; and not the less a heart because few shared its affections. But the feelings with which professed believers and unbelievers meet death, either for themselves or for others, are very nearly similar. When death comes into the circle of our friends and sunders the cords of affection, it is backward we look, not forward, and we are with the departed as he lives in our memories, not as he may be in our hopes. The hopes nurtured by religion are very consoling when grief exists only in anticipation, or after time has hallowed it; but they have little power in the moment when it actually breaks in upon the soul, and pierces the heart. Besides, there are few people who know how to use their immortality. Death to the great mass of believers as well as of unbelievers comes as the king of terrors, in the shape of a Total Extinction of being. The immortality of the soul is assented to rather than believed,—believed rather than lived. And withal it is something so far in the distant future, that till long after the spirit has left the body, we think and speak of the loved ones as no more. Rarely does the believer find that relief in the doctrine of immortality, which he insists on with so much eloquence in his controversy with unbelievers. He might find it, he ought to find it, and one day will; but not till he learns that man *is* immortal, and not merely is to be immortal.

"I lingered several weeks around the grave of my mother, and in the neighborhood where she had lived. It was the place where I had passed my own childhood and youth. It was the scene of those early associations which become the dearer to us as we leave them the farther behind. I stood where I had sported in the freedom of early childhood; but I stood alone, for no one was there with whom I could speak of its frolics. One feels singularly desolate when he sees only strange faces, and hears only strange voices in what was the home of his early life.

"I returned to the village where I resided when I first introduced myself to my readers. But what was that spot to me now? Nature had done much for it, but nature herself is very much what we make

her. There must be beauty in our souls, or we shall see no loveliness in her face; and beauty had died out of my soul. She who might have recalled it to life, and thrown its hues over all the world was — but of that I will not speak.

"It was now that I really needed the hope of immortality. The world was to me one vast desert, and life was without end or aim. The hope of immortality is not needed to enable us to bear grief, to meet great calamities. These can be, as they have been, met by the atheist with a serene brow and a tranquil pulse. We need not the hope of immortality in order to meet death with composure. The manner in which we meet death depends altogether more on the state of our nerves than the nature of our hopes. But we want it when earth has lost its gloss of novelty, when our hopes have been blasted, our affections withered, and the shortness of life and the vanity of all human pursuits have come home to us, and made us exclaim, 'Vanity of vanities, all is vanity;' we want then the hope of immortality to give to life an end, an aim.

"We all of us at times feel this want. The infidel feels it early in life. He learns all too soon, what to him is a withering fact, that man does not complete his destiny on earth. Man never completes anything here. What then shall he do if there be no hereafter? With what courage can I betake myself to my task? I may begin — but the grave lies between me and the completion. Death will come to interrupt my work, and compel me to leave it unfinished. This is more terrible to me than the thought of ceasing to be. I could *almost*, — at least, I think I could — consent to be no more, after I have finished my work, achieved my destiny; but to die before my work is completed, while that destiny is but begun, — this is the death which comes to me indeed as a 'King of Terrors.'

"The hope of another life, to be the complement of this, steps in to save us from this death, to give us the courage and the hope *to begin*. The rough sketch shall hereafter become the finished picture, the artist shall give it the last touch at his ease; the science we had just begun shall be completed, and the incipient destiny shall be achieved. Fear not to begin, thou hast eternity before thee in which to end.

"I wanted, at the time of which I speak, this hope. I had no future. I was shut up in this narrow life as in a cage. All for whom I could have lived, labored, and died, were gone, or worse than gone. I had no end, no aim. My affections were driven back to stagnate and become putrid in my own breast. I had no one to care for. The world was to me as if it were not; and yet a strange restlessness came over me. I could be still nowhere. I roved listlessly from object to object, my body was carried from place to place, I knew not why, and asked not myself wherefore. And, yet change of object, change of scene, wrought no change within me. I existed, but did not live. He who has no future, has no life." — pp. 88 — 93.

Elwood, at length, began to find composure of mind; time shed its soothing influences over his wounded spirit; and the first symptom of a better life was a vivid perception of the imperfections of the present social state. He brooded

over these, however, till his philanthropy became sour. In this state he made the acquaintance of a true man, whose influence gave a new direction to his whole character. This person was Mr. Howard, an elderly gentleman, of a wide and varied experience, a warm heart, a clear and discriminating mind, familiar with the general literature of the day, and cherishing elevated and comprehensive views of religion. The conversations of Elwood with this original and independent thinker are described with graphic clearness; they contain a system of theology; but any attempt to abridge them would do injustice to the momentous subjects of which they treat. Mr. Howard introduces Elwood to his minister, from whom he derives those views of religion, which finally serve as a foundation of faith. The portrait of Mr. Morton, for that was his name, is thus given.

"The day following the conversation I have just related, was Sunday, and Mr. Howard for the first time invited me to accompany him to his meeting. He remarked that his minister, though pretty orthodox in the main, was a little peculiar, and perhaps I should find myself interested, if not edified. Years had elapsed since I had entered a place of religious worship, and though I felt no great desire on my part to hear a sermon, yet as I thought I might please Mr. Howard by going, I accepted his invitation.

"The place of meeting was a public hall capable of holding some eight or nine hundred persons, and I found it well filled with a plain, sensible-looking congregation, whose earnest countenances indicated that they were there not because it was a place of fashionable resort, but because they were serious worshippers and honest inquirers after truth. A single glance told you that they were bold, earnest minds, who could look truth steadily in the face, let her assume what shape she might.

"The preacher, a Mr. Morton, was a tall, well-proportioned man, with something a little rustic in his appearance, indicating that his life had not been spent in the circles of the gay and the fashionable. Though far from being handsome, his features were striking and impressed themselves indelibly upon the memory. His dark complexion, and small, restless black eye bespoke an active and also an irritable disposition, and assured you that he might say some bitter things. His head was large, and his brow elevated and expanded. His face bore the marks of past struggle, whether with passion, the world, or sorrow, it was not easy to say. He was apparently under forty years of age, but you felt that he was a man who could speak from experience, that he was in fact no ordinary man, but one who had a biography, if you could only get at it. There was something almost repulsive about him, and yet you were drawn insensibly towards him.

"On commencing his discourse he seemed not exactly at his ease,

and his address was hurried, and ungraceful. His voice, too, though deep-toned, grated harshly on the ear, and produced a most unfavorable impression. But there was an air of earnestness about him, an evidence of intellectual vigor, and of moral honesty, which arrested your attention; while the novelty of his views and the boldness of his language served to enchain it till he closed. His discourse was to me a most singular production. I had never heard such a sermon before; and, I confess, I listened to it with the deepest interest."—pp. 146–148.

The philosophical basis of religion, which, in the main, coincides with the theory of M. Cousin, is exhibited in several conversations between Elwood and this ancient minister. We have room only for the following statement on the doctrine of creation.

"You will bear in mind, that we have found God as a cause, not a potential cause, occasionally a cause, accidentally a cause, but absolute cause, cause in itself, always a cause, and everywhere a cause. Now a cause that causes nothing is no cause at all. If then God be a cause, he must cause something, that is, create. Creation then is necessary."

"Do you mean to say that God lies under a necessity of creating?"

"God lies under nothing, for he is over all, and independent of all. The necessity of which I speak is not a foreign necessity, but a necessity of his own nature. What I mean is, he cannot be what he is without creating. It would be a contradiction in terms to call him a cause, and to say that he causes nothing."

"But out of what does God create the world? Out of nothing, as our old catechisms have it?"

"Not out of nothing certainly, but out of himself, out of his own fulness. You may form an idea of creation by noting what passes in the bosom of your own consciousness. I will raise my arm. My arm may be palsied, or a stronger than mine may hold it down, so that I cannot raise it. Nevertheless I have created something; to wit, the will or intention to raise it. In like manner as I by an effort of my will, or an act of my causality, create a will or intention, does God create the world. The world is God's will or intention, existing in the bosom of his consciousness, as my will or intention exists in the bosom of mine.

"Now, independent of me, my will or intention has no existence. It exists, is a reality no further than I enter into it; and it ceases to exist, vanishes into nothing, the moment I relax the causative effort which gave it birth. So of the world. Independent of God it has no existence. All the life and reality it has are of God. It exists no further than he enters into it, and it ceases to exist, becomes a nonentity, the moment he withdraws or relaxes the creative effort which calls it into being.

"This, if I mistake not, strikingly illustrates the dependence of the universe, of all worlds and beings on God. They exist but by his will. He willed, and they were; commanded, and they stood fast. He has but to will, and they are not; to command, and the heavens roll to—

gether as a scroll, or disappear as the morning mist before the rising sun. This is easily seen to be true, because he is their life, their being;—in him, says an apostle, “we live and move and have our being.”

“The question is sometimes asked, where is the universe? Where is your resolution, intention? In the bosom of your consciousness. So the universe, being God's will or intention, exists in the consciousness of the Deity. The bosom of the infinite Consciousness is its place, its residence, its home. God then is all round and within it, as you are all round and within your intention. Here is the omnipresence of the Deity. You cannot go where God is not, unless you cease to exist. Not because God fills all space, as we sometimes say, thus giving him as it were extension, but because he embosoms all space, as we embosom our thoughts in our own consciousness.

“This view of creation, also, shows us the value of the universe, and teaches us to respect it. It is God's will, God's intention, and is divine, so far forth as it really exists, and therefore is holy, and should be revered. Get at a man's intentions, and you get at his real character. A man's intentions are the revelations of himself; they show you what the man is. The universe is the revelation of the Deity. So far as we read and understand it, do we read and understand God. When I am penetrating the heavens and tracing the revolutions of the stars, I am learning the will of God; when I penetrate the earth and explore its strata, study the minuter particles of matter and their various combinations, I am mastering the science of theology; when I listen to the music of the morning songsters, I am listening to the voice of God; and it is his beauty I see when my eye runs over the varied landscape or “the flower-enamelled mead.”

“You see here the sacred character which attaches to all science, shadowed forth through all antiquity, by the right to cultivate it being claimed for the priests alone. But every man should be a priest; and the man of science, who does not perceive that he is also a priest, but half understands his calling. In ascertaining these laws of nature, as you call them, you are learning the ways of God. Put off your shoes then when you enter the temple of science, for you enter the sanctuary of the Most High.

“But man is a still fuller manifestation of the Deity. He is superior to all outward nature. Sun and stars pale before a human soul. The powers of nature, whirlwinds, tornados, cataracts, lightnings, earthquakes, are weak before the power of thought, and lose all their terrific grandeur in the presence of the struggles of passion. Man with a silken thread turns aside the lightning and chains up the harmless bolt. Into man enters more of the fulness of the Divinity, for in his own likeness God made man. The study of man then is still more the study of the Divinity, and the science of man becomes a still nearer approach to the science of God.

“This is not all. Viewed in this light what new worth and sacredness attaches to this creature man, on whom kings, priests and nobles have for so many ages trampled with sacrilegious feet. Whoso wrongs a man defaces the image of God, desecrates a temple of the living God, and is guilty not merely of a crime but of a sin. Indeed, all crimes become sins, all offences against man, offences against God. Hear this, ye wrong-doers, and know that it is not from your

feeble brother only, that ye have to look for vengeance. Hear this, ye wronged and down-trodden; and know that God is wronged in that ye are wronged, and his omnipotent arm shall redress you, and punish your oppressors. Man is precious in the sight of God, and God will vindicate him.’

“All this is very fine, but it strikes me that you identify the Deity with his works. You indeed call him a cause, but he causes or creates, if I understand you, only by putting himself forth. Independent of him, his works have no reality. He is their life, being, substance. Is not this Pantheism?”

“Not at all. God is indeed the life, being, substance of all his works, yet he is independent of his works. I am in my intention, and my intention is nothing any further than I enter into it; but nevertheless my intention is not *me*; I have the complete control over it. It does not exhaust me. It leaves me with all my creative energy, free to create anew as I please. So of God. Creation does not exhaust him. His works are not necessary to his being, they make up no part of his life. He retains all his creative energy, and may put it forth anew as seems to him good. Grant he stands in the relation of the closest relation to his works; he stands to them in the relation of a cause to an effect, not in the relation of identity, as pantheism supposes.’

“But waiving the charge of pantheism, it would seem from what you have said that creation must be as old as the Creator. What then will you do with the Mosaic cosmogony, which supposes creation took place about six thousand years ago?”

“I leave the Mosaic cosmogony where I find it. As to the inference that creation must be as old as the Creator, I would remark, that a being cannot be a creator till he creates, and as God was always a creator, always then must there have been a creation; but it does not follow from this that creation must have always assumed its present form, much less that this globe in its present state must have existed from all eternity. It may have been, for aught we know, subjected to a thousand revolutions and transformations, and the date of its habitation by man may indeed have been no longer ago than Hebrew chronology asserts.

“But much of this difficulty about the date of creation arises from supposing that creation must have taken place in time. But the creations of God are not in time but in eternity. Time begins with creation, and belongs to created nature. With God there is no time, as there is no space. He transcends time and space. He inhabiteth eternity, and is both time and space. When we speak of beginning in relation to the origin of the universe, we should refer to the source whence it comes, not to the time when it came. Its beginning is not in time but in God, and is now as much as it ever was.

“You should think of the universe as something which is, not as something which was. God did not, strictly speaking, make the world, finish it, and then leave it. He makes it, he constitutes it now. Regard him therefore not, if I may borrow the language of Spinoza, as its “temporary and transient cause, but as its permanent and in-dwelling cause;” that is, not as a cause which effects, and then passes off from his works, to remain henceforth in idleness, or to create new worlds; but as a cause which remains in his works, ever producing them, and

constituting them by being present in them, their life, being, and substance. Take this view, and you will never trouble yourself with the question whether the world was created, six thousand, or six million of years ago.'—pp. 198-204.

The result of Elwood's inquiries is expressed in the conclusion of the volume, and with it we will close the copious extracts which we have been unable to avoid.

"In looking back upon the long struggle I have had, I must thank God for it. I have been reproached by my Christian brethren; they have tried to make me believe that I was very wicked in being an unbeliever; but I have never reproached myself for having been one, nor have I ever regretted it. I would consent to go through the whole again, rather than not have the spiritual experience I have thus acquired. I have sinned, but never in having doubted. I have much to answer for, but not for having been an unbeliever. I have no apologies to make to the Christian world. I have no forgiveness to ask of it. I have done it no disservice, and it will one day see that I have not been an unprofitable servant. It has never fairly owned me, but I care not for that. Even to this day it calls me an infidel, but that is nothing. It will one day be astonished at its own blindness; and when freed from the flesh, in that world where I shall not be disturbed by the darkness of this, I shall see it doing even more than justice to my memory. I have not lived in vain, nor in vain have I doubted, inquired, and finally been convinced. When the scales fell from my eyes, and I beheld the true light, I followed it; and I have done what was in my power to direct others to it. My task is now well nigh done, and I am ready to give in my last account. I say not this in a spirit of vain boasting, but in humble confidence. I say it to express my strong faith in God, and in his care for all who attempt to do his will.

"I doubt not that many good Christians may be shocked at first sight at what I have here recorded. They will see no coincidence between the views here set forth and their own cherished convictions; but I will assure them, that as they read on, and fairly comprehend them, they will find the coincidence all but perfect. The christianity here set forth is the christianity of the universal church, though presented perhaps in an uncommon light. I cannot persuade myself that a new christianity is here presented, but the old christianity which all the world has believed, under a new aspect, perhaps, and an aspect more peculiarly adapted to the wants of the present age. It cannot have escaped general observation, that religion, for some time, has failed to exert that influence over the mind and heart that it should. There is not much open skepticism, not much avowed infidelity, but there is a vast amount of concealed doubt, and untold difficulty. Few, very few among us but ask for more certain evidence of the Christian faith than they possess. Many, many are the confessions to this effect, which I have received from men and women, whose religious character stands fair in the eyes of the church. I have been told by men of unquestionable piety, that the only means they have to maintain their belief even in God, is never to suffer themselves to inquire into

the grounds of that belief. The moment they ask for proofs, they say, they begin to doubt.

"Our churches are but partially filled, and the majority of those who attend them complain that they are not fed. Our clergy are industrious, and in most cases do all that men can do, and yet not many mighty works do they, because of the people's unbelief. Everywhere we hear complaint. Even amongst the clergy themselves doubt finds its way. Learned professors proclaim publicly and emphatically, even while denouncing infidelity, that we can have no certainty, that our evidence of christianity is at best but a high degree of probability. Surely, then, it is time to turn christianity over and see if it have not a side which we have not hitherto observed. Perhaps when we come to see it on another side, in a new light, it will appear unto us more beautiful and have greater power to attract our love and reverence.

"The views here presented have won the love and reverence of one man who was once as obstinate an unbeliever as can be found. I know not why they should not have the same effect on others."—pp. 259-262.

We have a few words only to add with regard to the manner in which Mr. Brownson deals with the objections of the skeptic. This we consider a leading merit of the work before us. The author speaks from personal experience, for he too has been through the conflict between received opinions and the light of truth; he has seen the impressions of childhood fade from the mind; with an earnest and susceptible religious nature, he has felt the difficulties of speculation; but he has never shrunk from the freest thought; he has trod the wine press for himself; and established the instinctive decisions of the heart on the basis of the universal reason. An experience similar to this is requisite in all, who would fairly meet the mind of the sincere skeptic. The want of such experience is the reason why so many of our standard writers on the foundation of faith are more ingenious than satisfactory, and usually fail to remove the difficulty that was deeply felt. They have no sympathy with doubt; their minds are of a different stamp from those that love to examine first principles; they are well satisfied with the traditions of ages; of the stern agony of thought, by which a rational faith is produced in a state of society that questions everything, they have no suspicion; they may become powerful advocates of the opinions which the multitude cling to; but they know not how to touch the spot where doubt rests in the heart which other causes than any vice or lie have

led to distrust its ancient faith; when they enter that sphere, let them hush.

The author of this work admits the full force of skeptical arguments, whenever they are founded in truth. He seems so sure of his cause, that he does not wish to rely on aught which does not bear the severest test. Accordingly, he betrays no alarm when certain statements that have long been relied on are shown to be defective; he clearly makes use of no reasons, adapted to the presumed weakness of his opponent, which are without force to his own mind; he will not "bring to the God of truth the unclean sacrifice of a lie;" and, in this manner, he gives a peculiar weight and authority to the conclusions which he adopts; so that their force is most speedily felt by the strongest minds.

Neither does he ever seek to evade the precise point on which the subject turns. More distinctly than most writers on theological questions does he perceive the true issue; and when he once states what it is, he does not leave it, without doing his best to dispatch it entirely. It is small praise to say, that he refrains from regarding as a crime the unbelief which he would remove. On this account, the present work will be favorably listened to by many, whom no persuasion can induce to enter the walls of a church, and who look with suspicion on the teachings of most of the professed advocates of religion. And they who are not converted by the reasonings here exhibited, with Elwood, will at least meet with much to stimulate them to further inquiry; they may find an aspect of religion, which they had not considered before; and new thought may at length give birth to new faith.

R.