

ARTICLE IV.

DAVUS SUM, NON OEDIPUS.

By Rev. Leonard Withington, D. D., Newburyport, Mass.

THE sentiment of Aristotle,¹ that it is by wondering, that men, both in the infancy of knowledge and in its maturity, began to philosophize, is verified in almost every department of human investigation. "The beginning of truth," says Clemens Alexandrinus, "is to wonder;" for this proceeds from conscious ignorance. There is an ignorance so profound that it is unconscious of its existence; hence the natives of North America, when our fathers sought these shores, looked up to the stars without attention enough to fall into the superstitions of astrology. Their ignorance was too complete to wonder; and hence they had not even those errors which lead to knowledge. There is a foolish wonder, it is true; but there is a beautiful wondering, which foreshadows the existence of some latent cause, and therefore sets about the task of finding it.

Believing, as Aristotle says, that there is a wonder that starts us on the career of investigation, because it, *οἷται ἀγνοεῖν*, knows itself to be ignorant, I would wish to state some of the wonderings one is apt to feel on the first perusal of church history, whether we read the old authors, or the more recent compendiums. We regard Christianity as a pure fountain, gushing from the eternal Rock; and we expect it to fertilize the desert through which it is destined to flow. We expect human nature to be elevated, purified, and almost restored to perfection. We expect the salutary action of revelation on the intellect as well as on the heart. It scarcely need to be observed that the first perusal of the most impartial record, is with a feeling of disappointment. Though some of the developments of the early Christians, in

¹ Metaph. 1, 2. See also Plato Theætetus, 155, Stallbaum.

self-denying virtue, are all we could wish or expect; yet, on the other side, surprising frailties meet our notice, and the mystical river flows through the moral desert like some real eastern stream, with one bank all verdure and fertility, and the other a barren sand.

Of the earlier historians, Eusebius seems to hold the first place; and the translation and notes of Valesius are accounted peculiarly excellent. Among others, there is one, on the second chapter, [Martyrs of Palestine,] which provokes a superinduced note. Eusebius, in relating the deaths and sufferings of the saints, passes by a great miracle, which others have related, and which is recorded in another work, generally attributed to Eusebius himself. Here the note-writer wonders. *Et hic mirari subit, omissum esse ab Eusebio ingens illud miraculum, hominis post linguæ præcisionem adhuc loquentis. De quo Prudentius in agone B. Romani, Chrysostomus in duobus sermonibus de Romano martyre: quorum tamen sermonum posterior non est B. Chrysostomi, ut ex stylo apparet. Denique Eusebius ipse in sermone 2 de Resurrectione. Abducebatur Romanus ad carcerem, etc.; and goes on to tell the omitted story. In a previous note, the very learned translator wonders, again, at an omitted miracle. Miror nullam ignis cœlitus extincti fieri mentionem, tum hic tum in Menologio. (See Eusebius, De Martyribus Palestinæ, p. 410, Reading's Edition, 1720, Cantab.)* Forasmuch, therefore, as many, both Papists and Protestants, have taken in hand to wonder at the records of these marvellous times, it seems good to me also, with my superficial knowledge, to set in order my impressions of wonders; and if any should say they are the wonderings of a tyro in church history, so much the better, since the wonderings of youth may be the wisdom of old age.

There can be no doubt that there is a stream beneath the surface, and that the darkness of church history is like the mists over a river, which, being dissipated by the morning sun, leave its windings to be traced, with new satisfaction, by the instructed eye.

The First wonder is, the obscurity which covers the deeds

and preachings of most of the first apostles. It seems as if twelve were chosen, and one (and he born out of due time) did all the work. The first command, *Go ye into all nations*, etc., was scarcely obeyed by those to whom it was given ; for, unless we trust the legends, to which no faith is due, we have scarcely any proof that any original apostle, except Peter and John, departed out of Palestine. How is this ? Is there any latent moral here ? It seems to be a law of history, that men are remembered as they have done memorable things. A deep contemporary interest reflects the name down to posterity. This rule has its exceptions ; but it may be a not unprofitable wonder to ask : What became of those shining lights, so divinely chosen, and which so suddenly became extinct ?

The Second wonder is, the amazing credulity which characterized the first ages of the church. The apostle, with fidelity, warned them, *γραῶδεις μύθους παραιτοῦ*, but the warning was not taken. The manly faith of Paul, and the weak credulity of the subsequent writers, forms a most astonishing contrast. And the wisest men seem, in this respect, to be smitten with some blasting planet. Jerome, for example, in the fifth century, is one of the first writers of the age, and yet his *Life of Antony the Hermit* contains stories which would now be rejected by the nursery. Augustine also astonishes us by his sound judgment, his deep sincerity, and by his amazing credulity. How could he believe such folly, speckled as it was, in the midst of so much wisdom ?

We are astonished, in the Third place, at the strange reasoning adopted by some judicious men. The argument *ad hominem* is produced to a most surprising extent. What they called the *economical* mode of reasoning was very prevalent. We find the following sentiments uttered and justified by Jerome : “ Simul dicimus plura esse videlicet genera dicendi, et inter cætera aliud esse *γυμναστικῶς* scribere, aliud *δογματικῶς*. In priori vagam esse disputationem, et adversario respondentem nunc hæc, nunc illa proponere, argumentari ut libet, aliud loqui, aliud agere, panem, ut dicitur, ostendere, lapidem tenere. In sequenti autem aperta frons, et, ut

ita dicam, ingenuitas necessaria. Aliud est quarere, aliud definire, in altero pugnandum, in altero docendum est. Tu me stantem in prælio et de vita periclitantem studiosus magister doceas? Noli ex obliquo et unde non putaris vulnus infligere, directo percute gladio, turpe tibi est hostem dolis ferire, non viribus, quasi non hæc ars summa pugnantis sit, alibi minari, alibi percutere; legite, obsecro vos, Demosthenem, legite Tullium; ac ne forsitan Rhetores vobis displiceant, quorum artis est verisimilia magis quam vera dicere; Legite Platonem, Theophrastum, Xenophontem, Aristotelem, et reliquos qui de Socratis fonte manantes diversis concurrere rivulis, quod in illis apertum, quid simplex est? Quæ verba non sensuum? Qui sensus non victoriæ? Origines, Methodius, Eusebius, Apollinaris multis versuum millibus scriberunt adversus Celsum et Porphyrium. Considerate quibus argumentis et quam lubricis problematibus Diaboli spiritu contexta subvertant, et quia interdum coguntur loqui, non quod sentiunt, sed quod necesse est dicunt ad versus ea quæ dicunt Gentiles. Taceo de Latinis sentitoribus, Tertulliano, Cypriano, Minutio, Victorino, Lactantio, Hilario, ne non tam me defendisse quam alios videar accusasse. (Jerome's Epistle to Pammachi, as quoted in Dallee's Use of the Fathers, chap. vi.)

In the Fourth place, their mode of quoting the Scriptures, derived from Philo, is very astonishing. In all ages, in interpreting the Bible, the great question has been how to *modernize* it. The Bible is a very ancient book; and, on a superficial view, it seems to treat of questions which have long since passed away. This is particularly true of the Old Testament. Now, in modernizing its instructions, some skill is required; and, lest the book should be perfectly antiquated, the old Fathers fell into the expedient of allegorizing, typifying, and finding an under-meaning, where all was simple and plain. From this delusion we are hardly yet recovered. The influence of the old Alexandrian Philo is felt at this day. The true way of *modernizing*, or of giving a permanent and rational interest to all the parts of Scripture, is to consider all its rites, sacrifices, laws, and examples, as a series of

PRECEDENTS, very much like the adjudged cases in our law-reports, to be applied to modern times, as far as the analogy holds. Thus the land-tenure which Moses appointed to the Israelites, to preserve their equality, may be a *general* guide to modern politicians, though the Israelitish reversion might be very dangerous if too servilely copied. Thus the Passover, without being an arbitrary type, may teach us, by a manifest resemblance, our deliverance through the death of Christ. *All history is a collection of precedents, and surely sacred history must be the same.* Thus far St. Paul goes, and this great principle gives us an ample field for instruction. *Now these things are our examples, to the intent we should not lust,* etc. But the ancient Fathers, not understanding this principle, and desirous to find something in the Old Testament, worthy of inspiration, plunged into recondite meanings and mystical interpretation, and made the whole Scripture dark by their attempts to make it too sublime. I need not specify; the instances are astonishing, and more astonishing from the general power of the men — Origen, Jerome, Augustine.¹

A Fifth wonder is, the mixture of self-denying virtue with weaknesses equally astonishing. Cave's *Primitive Christianity* is a very partial book. It is the profile of a face whose blemishes are on the hidden side. A far more true and instructive work might be written on that excellent but ill-executed design.

But there is a Sixth wonder; and that is, that the church so soon became a false interpreter of the Saviour's design in

¹ A writer in the *BIBLIOTHECA SACRA*, Andover, No. xvii., vol. v., assures us that "he cannot but wish, for his own credit, i. e. Jerome's, that he had always confined himself to scriptural exegesis." If he had, he would have gained proof enough of his folly. Did he not say that when David took Abishag to his bosom, 1 Kings, 1:3, 4, it was not literally a woman, but he took Heavenly wisdom to his heart? Does he not call his Commentary on Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Solomon's Song—*triduum opus*, the work of three days? See Dallee's *Use of the Fathers*, c. iii. Lib. ii., for other instances. However, the fact that Jerome is so often luminous, only makes his absurdities so much the more astounding.

See Beausobré, *Histoire Critique de Manichee*, Vol. I. Lib. i. chap. 4, for other instances in the most renowned writers.

forming it. When he established it on a rock, and promised that the gates of hell should not prevail against it, we are led to expect that body and soul should go together, that the outward frame should retain the spirit. How easy it would have been to find religion, if the visible organization of the true spirit had always been united! What increases the astonishment is, that the spirit should steal away so gradually; that the pure virgin should become the scarlet whore.

Seventhly; it is wonderful that the church, generally, so little answered its first design.

Eighthly; it is amazing that it so soon sunk into ritualism, from which, by its secession from Judaism, it seemed to escape. How was it, that the lessons of precept and experience (double precept and double experience; joyful experience and bitter experience) were so soon forgotten? How solemnly did Paul warn them against a religion of meats, drinks, and diverse washings; and how soon and how completely were these warnings forgotten! The sun breaks out from a cloud, and shines serenely for fifty years, and then the same cloud returns to obscure his beams for ages, darker and thicker than ever. Popery is but a mixture of Judaism and Paganism blended and restored.

In the Ninth place, one is astonished at the extravagance of the early heresies. Such a monstrous web of *à priori* reasoning, spun out of some crazy brain, which must have been half-conscious, amidst all its insanity, of its own baseless dreams.

It is well known that all the *early* heresies arose from that inscrutable question: *WHENCE CAME EVIL?* Augustine tells us that, even in his day, he fell into error because, *quærebam unde malum et non erat exitus* — he sought the origin of evil.

“And found no end, in wandering mazes lost.”

And again, he says, *quærebam æstuans unde sit malum*; and describes the agonies he felt in the pursuit.¹ Now, in

¹ Confess. Lib. vii. c. 7.

all the early Gnostic and Manichean heresies, this was the root of the error. The dogmatic relations of this insolvable question are reported by the Fathers; and, without adopting all their exaggerations, and admitting all the mitigations, supposed by Beausobrè, two wonders will still remain: 1st, that they did not see, at a glance, the impossibility of the solution; as Arnobius had said: *nescire nos ista nec quæ nullis possint facultatibus comprehendi expetisse aliquando aut studuisse cognoscere*;¹ and, 2d, that the daring supposition of two eternal, independent powers, was ten thousand times worse than any conclusion from which it was supposed to deliver them.²

There can be no doubt that the inductive philosophy of the present age, together with the experience which past extravagances have forced upon us, has relieved us from the speculative dangers which were once plausible enough to be destructive. But one must wonder that what was heresy then, would be madness now. Nevertheless, a reproduction of the past is possible. Let us not be high minded, but fear.

But, Tenthly, one cannot but wonder that, in following a teacher so celebrated as Jesus, and a disciple so refined as Paul, some of the best men of the early church should be so ignorant of the *τὸ πρέπον*, decorum, bienséance, as we are shocked to find them to be. We are told by Cicero, in his *De Officiis*, Lib. i, c. 35: "*Retinenda est igitur hujus generis verecundia, præcertim natura ipsa magistra et duce.*" The Fathers seem to have forgotten this precept. Some of the passages in Augustine are astonishing, and we cannot defile our pages with them.

They prove that the ancient church must have had a wonderful insensibility to topics which are now regarded as having no decent place but the profoundest oblivion.

In his Confessions, Augustine is very communicative; and

¹ See *Hist. de Manichee Beausobrè*. Vol. II. lib. v. c. 1.

² The apologizing Beausobrè remarks, of the fountain of these Heresies,—*Tout cela étoit connu dans l'orient, où l'Esprit Humain avoit longtems auparavant imaginé toutes ces ridicules cheméres.* *Hist. De Man.* Liv. I. chap. 3, Vol. I.

his freedom from decorum gives a simplicity and sincerity to his account of himself, which modern diaries do not afford. This, perhaps, is the sole advantage which their wonderful insensibility on this point possesses. We feel, in reading the accounts which many modern good men give of their conversion and inner exercises, that there is *one* class of temptations wholly omitted.

In the Eleventh place, it is wonderful the little action of Christianity on the mind in the way of mental acuteness, compared with the great change found in a subsequent age, when the school-men arose. The church that could hardly untwist a cable, comes, at last, to split hairs. I know not that Plato is much behind Aristotle, in metaphysical acumen. But no sooner is the one philosophy exchanged for the other, than the whole tribe of writers become different beings. On this subject a volume might be written; but we pass on—

Twelfthly, to express greater astonishment, that so stringent an hierarchy as the later church was, should arise, in so few centuries, from so free a church. Neander tells us that “while the gospel put away that which separated man from God, by bringing all men into the same communion with God, through Christ; it also removed the partition-wall which separated one man from his fellows in regard to his more elevated interests. The same high Priest and Mediator for all, through whom all, being reconciled and united with God, became themselves a priestly and heavenly race! One heavenly King, Guide, and Teacher, through whom all are taught from God! One faith, one hope. One Spirit, which must animate all! One oracle in the hearts of all.” (Neander’s Church Hist. Vol. I. sect. ii. Rose’s Translation.) It would seem, from this writer, that the church began with the warmest enthusiasm and the greatest democracy—no sacerdotal feelings; they were all *a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a peculiar people*. Now, without going to the extreme of Neander, by denying that there existed any class of professional teachers at first; it appears from Paul’s reasonings that the tendency was to an almost volcanic freedom. No ritual reverence, no hierarchy, no priesthood.

From such a root, how did such branches grow? We allow the moulding hand of time, and the force of human corruption. But why was the original type lost? Why did the river wind so much as to flow in nearly an opposite direction? How did they get their outward unity? How came councils to have such powers? How came the Pontiff to assume his state? and why, with so free a religion, was the sweetest liberty so completely lost? Here is a wonder. Is it not the greatest miracle in the kingdom of darkness? If South Carolina should become earnest for consolidation; the Georgians, furious abolitionists; New York, united; and Missouri, meek and gentle; it would not be more mysterious and strange.

There is still a Thirteenth wonder: that some of the best writers should set the seal of their approbation on such weak productions as they are found to do. Where was their critical sagacity? Only think of the following passage in Eusebius (*Hist. Eccl. Lib. iii. c. 3. p. 72*): "Forasmuch as the Apostle, in the salutation at the end of his Epistle to the Romans, makes mention, among others, of *Hermas*, who, 'tis said, wrote the book called *THE SHEPHERD*; it is to be observed, that it is doubted of by some. Wherefore, it ought not to be placed among the books of unquestioned authority. By others, it is judged to be the most necessary book, especially to those who are to be instructed in the first elements of religion! And we know, that it is publicly read in the churches, and that some very ancient writers make use of it." Jerome says: "It is, indeed, a useful book!" Compare this with what Mosheim says of it in *Dr. Murdock's Translation*: — "A useful book, to be given to those in the first elements of religion!!!" Suppose we should find in *Dr. Lardner's* writings (supposing he had lived long enough) a remark like this: that the *BANK OF FAITH*, by *Wm. Huntington, S. S.*, is not exactly inspired, but is a very useful and judicious book, especially for young people; and gives, in the best manner, the elements of our holy religion. What should we think of so injudicious a decision in so judicious a critic? His general character would only serve to increase
r astonishment.

Let us offer but one wonder more, and that shall be a conditional one ; and that is, *whether*, amidst the conflicts and triumphs of the general orthodoxy of the church, down to the conclusion of the Pelagian heresy, there was an UNIVERSAL REASON, not individual, which secretly but surely guided the predominant opinion, so that each dispute and each termination of it, was not an accident but a law, not the voice of human passion, but an oracle from God. I apprehend, in literature, there is, behind all accidental revolution, a secret law, which, though often disturbed and never infallible, is yet found to guide many of the caprices of which we are apt to complain. To illustrate what I mean : it is well known that Greek literature, with its blazing merits, swept away from Rome all the old lays ; which were the work of their early poets, and the foundation of their history. Italian literature, it is said, threatened to do the same thing for the Spanish ballads, in the days of Charles V. But in Spain the work was not done ; the old lays revived ; they were sung by the people and preserved in memory ; and no time will now erase them from the records of the nation. Now, quere : Is there any law that causes this difference in the two cases ? Why did the Roman lays perish ? Why were the Spanish preserved ? In glancing over the few specimens preserved by Niebuhr, we seem to discover the reason. The Roman verse was so poor, so jejune, had so little merit, that it sunk, like lead, in the mighty waters of oblivion. I am inclined to think that one reason why so much of the old Greek comedy was lost, as is related by Cumberland, was, the everlasting repetition of the same sentiments and characters ; which overloaded the memory, and made it perish, *by a general law*. Now it is a fair question : In the church, was there a GENERAL LAW, behind contingent events, which fixed the order of the various controversies, and settled the ecclesiastical opinion *as it was settled*. The first development of the Gospel was Historical ; then they grappled with those infantile questions, the origin of Evil, specially in the Gnostic and Manichean heresies ; then they come to the person of Christ ; and, lastly, to the more metaphysical subjects of grace and

free-will. The decision, too, had a cause more potent than the individuals. At any rate, it may be instructive to ask, and perhaps possible to show, that, as certain powers of attraction keep the earth in its orbit, regulate its speed, and determine its course, so there was A MENTAL LAW, AN IMPERSONAL REASON, A GENERAL CONSCIENCE, AN ALL-DIFFUSED SPIRIT, which guided the path of speculation, and stamped the page of history with its present creed. If oblivion could roll her waters over the whole transaction, and the process was to proceed anew, would the church substantially act the same part? This is the test.

Should it appear that there was a generic reason and general æsthetic powers, which guided the early deliberations to their last conclusion, then a very delicate question meets the inquirer, to ascertain what it is — its laws of operation, and importance; just as the engineer must see, in the streams and openings of the rocky mountains, where the railroad must go, which is to unite the two shores of our continent together. Here is a place for discernment and impartiality. In the history of our country, we have no doubt that in forming the Federal Constitution, in assuming the debts by Hamilton's funding-system, there was something, — not exactly private influence, though not exactly independent of it — which made order and national faith triumph over disorder and radicalism. The balance trembled for a while, in fearful uncertainty; and yet, at last, *something* decided it. So we may ask the question: What was the great moral, intellectual, spiritual law, that decided the suffrages of the church? Was there such a law? And what was it? And what was its import? Take the council of Nice, as an example. We see two POWERS opposing each other: First, the logical absurdities imputed, by Arius, to the assertion of the equality of the Son with the Father; and, Secondly, the shock of feelings which arose from lowering the dignity of the Son, together with the shock from the unsacred and bold interpretation of Scripture. Now, the latter feeling, in the majority, triumphed over the former. But how? Why? Capriciously, by the arbitrary interposition of Provi-

dence, or was it BY A LAW, not definite and infallible, perhaps, but distinct enough to be ascertained, and powerful enough to influence? A historian impartial enough to investigate this question wisely and satisfactorily, ought to be crowned with a garland of roses never to fade. His name would be immortal.

One of the Roman historians¹ compares the Empire to human life: it had its infancy, boyhood, maturity, and old age — senectus imperii. Something like this might be imputed to the church. The historical form of faith, in the first century — the form of the first heresies — are remarkably infantile; then, the Gnostic discussions are like a very young man; the controversies on the person of Christ, mark more maturity; and the Pelagian question must last, in some form and some degree, until the Millennium. Thus the *order* of the ecclesiastical discussion had a reason; no skill could have parried them off.

We have heard of the seven wonders of the world; and were one fond of cabalistic numbers, it would have been easy to duplicate the number seven, and a fourteenth *mirabile dictu*, namely, monkery and its austerities would be found. But it is hardly a wonder; it was rather an emanation from the form of society then prevalent. The more we look at the web of manners and the form of government, the less should we be astonished that men were driven, from social misery, to solitary freedom. Terrible are the burdens of an effete and falling empire; and it was a social passion that drove the old monks into the desert. Simeon Stylites had an influence, on his pillar, which he could have found nowhere else. When kings, statesmen, and bishops came to the foot of his column to admire his austerities and hear his inspirations, no wonder that ambition and social feeling should both conspire to fix him on his giddy elevation. For force of genius, some minds have been compelled to substitute force of will. One of the Superiors of the convent in Mar-hanna in Syria thus addressed Volney the traveller: "You, who

¹ Florus Proem. page 6.

come from a country where men live in security and abundance, may consider our life as an insupportable self-denial, and our retreat from the world as a sacrifice. But in the situation of this country, perhaps the case is different. What can we do? Turn merchants? We should be then overwhelmed with the cares of business and our families; and, after having worked hard for thirty years, comes the Aga, the Pacha, or the Cadi; we are brought to trial, without even the shadow of a crime; witnesses are summoned to accuse us; we are bastinadoed, plundered, and turned into the world as naked as the first day we entered it. As for the peasant, his case is still worse: the Aga oppresses him; the soldier pillages him; and the Arabs rob him. Shall we become soldiers? The profession is laborious and dangerous; and how it will end, is not very certain. It may seem hard, perhaps, to shut ourselves up in a convent; but at least we live there in peace; and, though in a state of habitual abstinence and poverty, we possess and enjoy more than we should if we had continued in the world. Observe the situation of the peasants, and look at ours. We possess everything they have, and even what they have not: we are better clad and better fed; we drink wine and coffee; and who are our monks, but the children of peasants? You talk of the Copts of St. Macarius and St. Antony. Be assured their condition is better than that of the Bedouins and Fellahs, who surround them." (Volney's Travels, Vol. II. p. 470, 471.)

The condition of the falling empire of Rome was not much better than that of the Pachas in the East. The incumbent weight of oppression, crowds out men from active life into sanctity and solitude.

The writer of this Article gives no pledge that he has exhausted the circle of even his own wonderings; for wondering is a very easy task. The great secret is, to wonder in the right place. But here is a catalogue: First, that a college of apostles was chosen, and the work devolves on a few individuals; secondly, the amazing credulity of the first writers and ages; thirdly, the *kind* of reasoning adopted by

some of the most eminent men, politic rather than true; fourthly, their mystic mode of interpreting the Scriptures, derived from the Alexandrian Jews; fifthly, the mixture of self-denying virtue with astonishing weakness; sixthly, that the spirit of the old church so silently leaked away from its form; seventhly, that it almost *counteracted* its original design; eighthly, its rapid return to discarded ritualism; ninthly, the extravagance of the early heresies; tenthly, the want of delicacy and decorum in the Fathers; eleventhly, the little and over-action of mental acumen; twelfthly, the stringent hierarchy, which grew out of the freest democracy; in the thirteenth place, the astonishing criticism on the earlier writers; and, lastly, the conditional wonder *whether* an universal reason presided in the impersonated church, which had any tendency to give value to her inquiries, and a seal to her decisions. Such are the impressions which one tyro has felt, in perusing those pages which record the effects of revelation and the blessings of Christianity.

The removal of a paradox is always doubled instruction. If, notwithstanding all its short-reachings towards expected perfection, Christianity has been an inestimable benefit to the individual and the social system, to government and law, no doubt the discovery will be a delightful confirmation of its truth, and an illustration of its power. "The structure of the natural world," says Dr. Blair,¹ "affords innumerable instances of profound design, which no attentive spectator can survey without wonder. In the moral world, where the workmanship is of much finer and more delicate contexture, subjects of still greater admiration open to view. But admiration must rise to its perfect point, when those parts of the moral constitution, which at first were reported blemishes, which carried the appearance of objections, either to the wisdom or goodness of Providence, are discovered, on more accurate inspection, to be adjusted with the most exquisite propriety." In like manner, when we see the imbecility and confusion in Christian society, which first caused

¹ Blair's Sermons, serm. iv. Vol. i.

our disappointment, converted to admiration by an obvious discovery of the latent design of God, we feel a sentiment like that arising when we find a coal-formation beneath a barren surface; and learn that where all was seeming sterility, nature has been treasuring up fuel for ages.

Let us wait, then, for the fog to clear away, before we judge of the magnificence of the prospect. Let us not impute to God the projections of our own ignorance. Church history is a series of IMPORTANT EXAMPLES. The influence of feeling on speculation, and speculation on feeling, the action and reaction of the reigning controversy; the effects of one doctrinal point of view on another; the connection of the mental philosophy with the popular faith; the causes and consequences of the popular faith; the lights that led, and the lights that misled, the church; the influence of a sound or unsound Biblical interpretation; and the question whether there is, in the long run, a tendency to an all-conquering creed, and to a *human*¹ perfection — these are points never yet cleared, and yet vastly important. If the Bible is God's word, a well-written church history is his Providential commentary.

ARTICLE V.

GERMAN THEORY OF WORSHIP.²

I. *Introductory Remarks.*

THE topics relating to religious worship, which, to a somewhat unusual extent, occupy the public mind at the present moment, refer primarily to certain outward forms; and,

¹ That is, such a perfection as may be reasonably expected in this world.

² Liturgik und Homiletik. MS. Lectures of Prof. Julius Müller.

Evangelische Homiletik, von Christian Palmer.

Grundlegung der Homiletik, von Philipp Marheinecke.