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spirit and method, a far nobler work would he have wrought, and a more honorable record would he have left in the annals of his country and of the church. But his natural tendencies and his whole education were so against him, that he failed of the spiritual *insight* which is essential to the true "divine," and which would have put him in possession of the central meaning of the Christian system, and have shown him that it is all that he understood by "the absolute religion" and more, to wit: the absolute religion in a shape to be vitally apprehended and appropriated by mankind, so as to be the means of transforming the marred nature of our sinful race back into the image of the glory of its first estate, of God's eternal archetype. These causes of error were greatly aggravated, also, by that antagonism into which his opinions and the spirit of his advocacy brought him, and which irresistibly intensified his faults. Let the mantle of charity be thrown over all; and after fitly recognizing what it is our duty to see and to declare, let every soul cherish thoughts of tenderness. Well did the Apostle pray without ceasing, for his brethren, that God would give them the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ. God grant it to us all.

ARTICLE II.

THE THEOLOGY OF SOPHOCLES.

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[Concluded from Vol. XVII., p. 619.]

Antigone.

In its leading characters, the *Antigone* bears a strong resemblance to the *Electra*. The central figure in each, on whom all eyes are fastened, and who gives name to the piece, is a young woman, who stands up for the right, in opposi-

tion to the ruling powers, and is willing to sacrifice herself in the performance of a duty, which she owes to her kindred, to justice, and to the gods. In each, the heroine, who is made of sterner stuff, and possesses the martyr-spirit, is contrasted with a sister, of more complying disposition, the representative of ordinary womanhood. Antigone is offset by Ismene, as Electra is by Crysothemis, and is exalted to a higher pitch of heroism and self-sacrificing devotion by the contrast. But Electra has the sympathy and support of the chorus, which is made up of noble women, like herself; while the chorus in Antigone, consisting of Theban senators and courtiers, after a few feeble attempts to withstand oppression, yield a servile submission to the tyrant, and leave the more manly, more heroic woman to stand up, unfriended and alone, against despotism, clothed with the forms of the law and the powers of the state. Moreover, Electra has a brother to lean upon, who takes the active part in the work of vengeance, while Antigone, although she has a lover who pleads her cause, is forbidden by female delicacy to ask his coöperation, or even to mention his name; and so she goes, alone, to perform, with her own hand, the prohibited rites of sepulture to her brother. This, however, she is the better able to do, because there is no room for doubt or conflict in her own bosom. Electra, in avenging her father's death, is obliged to lift her hand against the life of her mother. The ties of nature bind her to both her parents. The claims of filial duty might well impel her in opposite directions. But in Antigone, however plausible the pleas by which the ruling powers justify their actions to their own consciences, it could not but appear to her a clear case of wrong to the dead on one side, and of duty to the dead on the other. Whether, therefore, we consider the holy cause in which she is enlisted, or the solitary grandeur in which she resists the mandates of the government, Antigone carries with her our undivided sympathy, and rises to a moral sublimity that finds its parallel only in the annals of martyrdom, in which tender and delicate, yet heroic and devoted, women have ever borne a conspicuous part.

Not the least interesting feature to modern readers — and

doubtless a point of chief interest to the writer also and his contemporaries — is the conflict between human government and divine authority; in other words now familiar to our ears, the conflict between the lower and “the higher law,” which lies at the foundation of the plot, and makes itself prominent in the dialogue. Creon is an eloquent advocate of the divine right of kings to do wrong; and of that still more subtle and demoralizing heresy: “our country, right or wrong.” Antigone asserts the eternal and immutable supremacy of the law and government of God, with a clearness and force, which should put to the blush the professedly Christian but practically atheistic politicians and divines, who deny the existence, in *political affairs*, of any higher law than the law of the land — of any will paramount to the will of the people.

After the defeat of the confederate chiefs and the death of the two brothers, rival claimants to the throne of Oedipus, which Aeschylus has sketched, with such a masterly hand, in his “Seven against Thebes,” Creon, who as nearest of kin, has now succeeded to the throne, awards sepulchral honors to Eteocles; but forbids, under the severest penalties, the burial of Polynices, as a traitor to his country. Antigone, in open disobedience to the inhuman mandate, performs the last sad offices to her unhappy brother, and falls beneath the vengeance of the king. But the blow recoils, with overwhelming force, upon the whole family of the oppressor. The law of the land seizes on its victim; but divine justice soon overtakes the maker and executioner of the law. Warned by providence and awakened to a sense of his guilt and folly by visible tokens of divine displeasure, he begins to retrace his steps. But it is now too late. The storm has already gathered; and now it bursts, and not only strikes down the guilty, but involves also the innocent, who are connected with the guilty; nay, it strikes the personally guilty chiefly through those members of his family who are personally innocent.

Here, not only the conclusion, as in Ajax, but the whole plot, turns on the sacredness of the right of burial; sacred in the sight of the gods, as well as in the eyes of men: and here

too, as in Ajax, Trachiniae, and Oedipus, suicide is the last resource of those who find the ills of life too heavy to be borne.

The opening scene between the two sisters is pathetic, and almost painful, especially in the want of sympathy and sisterly tenderness between those who now have no earthly resource but their love for one another. But it is of dramatic rather than theological interest.

Creon, on whom the sceptre has now devolved, next appears before the councillors of the state, who constitute the chorus; and, after a preface, in which he justifies his course by the most plausible reasons of patriotism and state policy, to which he is willing to sacrifice even the ties of friendship and relationship, he makes public proclamation forbidding the burial of that son of Oedipus who, in asserting his right to the throne, had dared to levy war, in foreign lands, against his own country. The chorus, who had just been celebrating the fall of the confederate chiefs beneath the walls, now, as in duty bound, acknowledge Creon's right to rule over the *dead as well as the living* (214). Scarcely has the proclamation gone forth from his lips, when a messenger arrives bringing intelligence that some one has already dared to sprinkle dust over the dead. The chorus venture humbly to raise the question, whether this may not be a divinely ordered deed (*Σεήλατου τοῦργου τόδε*, 278). But Creon sternly rebukes the thought that the gods can honor one so accursed; and from this time the chorus are little more than politicians, courtiers, echoes of the king. In the spirit of an Asiatic despot, Creon threatens death to the messenger himself, if he does not detect the guilty person; and the chorus, in place of the high-toned moral and religious sentiments which such tyranny and impiety should elicit, goes off into a splendid lyric declamation (332—375) on the marvellous inventive powers of mankind,¹ the gods of this lower world, and the conquerors of all but death.

The messenger now returns, bringing with him the young

¹ Very like, — perhaps the original of Hamlet's celebrated panegyric: "What a piece of work is Man." See also Eccl. 7:29: "They have sought out many inventions."

Antigone; and relates how, when the guard had removed the slight covering of earth that had been cast upon the body, — an act of impiety which was followed by whirlwinds and sweeping clouds of dust, the visible tokens of heaven's displeasure, she had been detected in again scattering dust and pouring libations on the dead. When asked by Creon, if she knew the royal command, she frankly avows her intentional disobedience. When further asked, how she dared to disobey, she makes this heroic, this martyr-like, this almost inspired answer :

Ne'er did eternal Jove such laws ordain,
 Or justice, throned amid the Infernal Powers,
 Who on mankind these holier rites imposed.
 Nor can I deem thine edict armed with power .
 To contravene the firm unwritten laws
 Of the just gods, thyself a weak, frail mortal!
 These are no laws of yesterday: they live
 Forevermore, and none can trace their birth. — (450 seq.)

Creon declares that, though sprung from his own sister, Antigone shall suffer the full penalty of her disobedience; and, crowning cruelty with impiety (for Jupiter is already making mad whom he intends to destroy), he gratuitously adds :

Were she sprung from one
 Dearer than all whom *Hercian Jove* defends,
 She and her sister shall not now evade
 A shameful death. — (486 seq.)

Antigone bids him hasten his tyrannical will; enough for her is the holy praise of having done her duty to her brother.

Cre. Doth it not shame thee to dissent from these ?¹
Ant. I cannot think it shame to love my brother.
Cre. Was not he too, who died for Thebes, thy brother ?
 Why then dishonor him to grace the guilty ?
Ant. The dead entombed will not approve thy words.
Cre. Yet he wronged his country :
 The other fought undaunted in her cause.
Ant. Still Death² at least demands an equal law.
Cre. Ne'er should the base be honored like the noble.

¹ The Chorus.

² δ' Αἰδώς.

Ant. Who knows, if this be holy in the shades? ¹

Cre. Death cannot change a foe into a friend.

Ant. My love shall go with thine, but not my hate.²

Cre. Go, then, and love them in the tomb; ¹ but know.

No woman rules in Thebes, while Creon lives.—(510 seq.)

Ismene enters, and is charged with being an accomplice of Antigone. With true womanly fortitude and beautiful sisterly affection, she consents to share the guilt, if her sister does not refuse. But Antigone, whose heart is steeled, even against her sister, by the terrible process through which she has passed, scorns a friend who loves only in words, and denies her sister's right, though tenderly pleading for it now as a privilege, to die with her whose life has long been devoted to the dead. Ismene now turns to Creon (who thinks that of the two maidens, the one has gone mad, and the other was born so), and pleads for the life of Antigone, urging especially that she is the affianced bride of Creon's son. But Creon answers that she is already dead, and Hades shall put a stop to the intended nuptials. And the chorus, as if her doom were fixed, descant at length on the wretchedness of families, on which there rests an hereditary taint or curse :

But when a house is struck by angry Fate,
Through all its line what ceaseless miseries flow!
I see the ancient miseries of thy race,
O Labdacus, arising from the dead
With fresh despair; nor sires from sons efface
The curse some angry Power hath rivetted
Forever on thy destined line!—(583 seq.)

This curse, however, is not irrespective of the character and conduct of the individuals. Their own folly and madness conspire with divine vengeance: *Ἄττη, Ἄνοια* and *Ἐρινός* reap, together, the bloody harvest, and the imperishable, irresistible might of Jove presides over all :

Κατ' αὖ νιν θεῶν φοινία τῶν
Νερτέρων ἀμῆ κοπίς,
Λόγου τ' ἄνοια καὶ φρενῶν Ἐρινός, κ. τ. λ. — (601 seq. cf. 584.)

¹ Κάτω.

² The flexibility and expressiveness of the Greek in this verse is inimitable ;
ὅς τοι συνέχθειν, ἀλλὰ συμφιλεῖν ἔφην. — (523).

Grand, worthy almost of some Hebrew prophet, is the description of the unsleeping, undecaying power and dominion of Jove :

Spurning the power of age, enthroned in might,
 Thou dwell'st mid heaven's broad light.
 This was, in ages past, thy firm decree,
 Is now, and shall, forever, be :
 That none of mortal race, on earth, shall know
 A life of joy serene, a course unmarked by woe. — (606-14.)

The chorus do not seem to be aware that they are thus not only deploring the calamities of the house of Oedipus, but foreshadowing those which are soon to fall upon the family of Creon. And yet more distinctly, though still unconsciously, do coming events cast their shadows before, as the chorus descant, in the conclusion of their song (615 seq.), upon the delusive power of hope, and the blinding force of passion, changing evil to apparent good, in the eyes of him whom the god is hurrying to destruction.

As the chorus conclude this unconscious prophecy, Haemon, the son of Creon and the affianced husband of Antigone enters ; and, with a filial deference which contrasts beautifully with the unfeeling, unparental sternness of his sire, pleads, not so much his own cause, or that of his affianced bride, as the character, reputation, and well-being of his father. The son now takes up the doctrine of the higher law, while the father, as the advocate of the lower, lays down the doctrine of implicit obedience to the powers that be, in all things whatsoever, whether right or wrong :

Καὶ σμικρὰ, καὶ δίκαια καὶ τάναντία. — (667)

Haem. That is no state, which crouches to one despot.

Cre. Oh thou most vile !

Wouldst thou withstand thy father ?

Haem. When I see

My father swerve from justice.

Cre. Do I err,

Revering my own laws ?

Haem. Dost thou revere them,

When thou wouldst trample on the laws of heaven ?

(737-745).

The unnatural father at length proceeds so far as to threaten to put to death the bride of Haemon before his own eyes. Haemon declares that shall never be, but he will leave his father's sight forever. As he goes away, the chorus express their fears that he may perpetrate some act of rashness. But Creon, blinded by pride and passion, says : Let him do it : still he shall not save Antigone.

To a spot

By mortal foot untrodden, will I lead her,
 And deep immure her in a rocky cave,
 Leaving enough of sustenance to provide
 A due atonement, that the State may shun
 Pollution from her death.¹ There let her call
 On gloomy Hades, the sole power she owns,
 To shield her from her doom ; or learn, though late,
 At least this lesson : 'tis a bootless task
 To render homage to the Powers of hell. — (773 seq.)

A chorus succeeds, celebrating the irresistible power of Love :

Ἔρως ἀνίκατε μάχαν. — (781)

and then Antigone is brought in, under guard, and she and the choir bewail, in responsive strains, like Jephthah's daughter and her companions, her unhappy lot, to be wedded only to death ; or, what is worse, to live, Niobe-like, petrified with grief, tears ever flowing down her rocky cheeks. The chorus, however, do not admit that she is an innocent sufferer :

Deeply, my daughter, hast thou sinned
 Against the exalted throne of right.

And they even add sentiments worthy the lips of their master Creon :

Religion bids us grace the dead ;
 But Might, when regal might bears sway,
 Must never, never be contemned.

Creon, at length, breaks off the lamentation by hurrying

¹ How like the *ceremonial scruples* of the Jews, when they were intent on shedding the blood of their innocent victim. — John 19 : 28.

her away to a living death, to which she goes expostulating with the gods and struggling with her own doubts of divine justice :

Which of your laws, ye Powers, have I transgressed ?
 Yet wherefore do I turn me to the gods ?
 If acts like these are sanctioned by the gods,
 I will address me to my doom in silence. — (921 seq.)

The next chorus still expatiates on the irresistible power of Destiny, as illustrated in its victims, from Danae to Antigone :

'Αλλὰ κάπ' ἐκείνα
 Μοῖραι μακραίωνες ἔσχον, ᾧ παῖ. — (986-7)

The blind old prophet Tiresias (the same who denounced on Oedipus his doom, in the presence of Creon) now breaks in upon Creon himself, like one of those sudden and awful appearances of Elijah to the king of Israel, and strives to arrest him in his career of madness. In the exercise of his holy calling as a prophet-priest, he has seen frightful omens : birds with dissonant cries tearing each other, and the hallowed fire on the altar casting out the offerings as unholy ; and he interprets these omens dire as tokens of the divine displeasure at the king's unrelenting refusal to permit the burial of the son of Oedipus. At the same time, addressing him kindly as his son, and reminding him that to err is human, he calls upon him to remedy the error by retracing his steps, as now he may, while it is not yet too late :

Ἐπὴν δ' ἀμάρτη, κείνος οὐκ ἔτ' ἔστ' ἀνήρ
 Ἄβουλος οὐδ' ἀνολβος, ὅστις ἐς κακὸν
 Περσὼν ἀκείται, μηδ' ἀκίνητος πέλει. — (1025 seq.)

But the king is still unrelenting. He charges the prophet with bribery, criminales the whole race of prophets as a venal race, and even dares, indirectly, to defy the avenging bolts of heaven, by declaring that, though Jove's eagles should carry the dead body to the throne of Jove himself, not even the fear of such pollution (*μῖασμα*) should induce him to permit

the burial, for he knows well that no mortal *can* pollute the gods :

Ἐὶ γὰρ οἷδ' ὄρι
Θεοὺς μαιίνειν οὔτις ἀνθρώπων σθένει. — (1044)

Now the king has received his last warning. The minister of God has made his last effort to save him. And now the insulted prophet, not without some apparent mixture of personal resentment, proceeds to denounce upon him the just recompense of his crimes according to the ancient *lex talionis*: life for life — one dead from his own family for the dead whom he has wronged and dishonored (*νέκυν νεκρῶν ἀμοιβὸν ἀντιδοῦς*, 1067). And since he has intermeddled with matters with which neither he nor the gods above have any proper part, the powers beneath, the *after-destroying Erinyes of Hades and of the gods* (*ὑστεροφθόροι . . . "Αἰδου καὶ θεῶν Ἐρινύες*, 1075) are already lying in wait to avenge upon him the invasion of their prerogatives.

No sooner has the prophet departed, than the king begins to stagger under the weight of the curses that have fallen upon him; and yielding, now, to the counsels of the choir, he takes measures for the *immediate* reparation of his wrong, since the curses of the gods are swift-footed to cut off (*συντέμνειν*¹) the evil-minded. But it is already too late to repair the mischief. He sends his attendants, with all speed, to release Antigone. But it is too late. He hastens himself to bathe and bury the body of Polynices, imploring Pluto and Proserpine to restrain their anger. But it is too late. The chorus intercede with Bacchus, the patron god of the city, and Phoebus, the son of Jove. But it is too late. Prayers and efforts are now unavailing. While they yet utter the language of prayer, a messenger comes and announces that all is lost.² Antigone has made way with herself by a noose woven from her own dress; and Haemon, embracing her lifeless body, lies

¹ Cf. Rom. 9 : 28 ; *συντέμνων ἐν δικαιοσύνη*.

² The poet has put into the mouth of this messenger words of high import and remarkable conciseness touching the perpetual obligations of *truth*; *ἄρδον ἢ ἄλθει' ἀεί* (1195). They chime well with the *higher law* doctrine of the tragedy.

weltering in his own blood. Eurydice, the wife of Creon, hears the overwhelming news, and without uttering a word, goes away to follow the example of her only son. And while Creon is lamenting the death of that son, and cursing his own folly as its cause, a second messenger comes to him announcing the death of his wife, and that she died imprecating curses on his head as the murderer of their child. He takes all the blame to himself, and prays for death, bereft, as he is, by his own blind folly, of friends and resources, with all adverse in the present, and an intolerable fate overhanging him in the future. And the drama closes with this reflection of the chorus, summing up the moral lessons of the piece :

There is no guide to happiness on earth,
Save Wisdom; nor behooves it us to fail
In reverence to the gods. High sounding vaunts
Inflict due vengeance on the haughty head,
And teach late wisdom to its dark old age.

Some critics have strenuously maintained that the Antigone was intended to censure, alike, the transgressor of human statutes and the violator of divine laws. Both laws do, indeed, claim their victims. But the moral lesson, gathered from the piece by the chorus, applies directly to the arrogance and impiety of the aged Creon (*γῆρα τὸ φρονεῖν ἐδίδαξαν*). Moreover, as we have before remarked, the sympathies of the audience are with Antigone. *Her* death is viewed as a calamity, in which she is involved by the curse on her family; while Creon confesses, with his own lips, that the ruin which has fallen upon *his* entire family is the just punishment of his own evil counsels (1269). The transgressor of human statutes, even though he acts in obedience to his own conscience, transgresses at his peril.¹ But the violator of divine law, even though in obedience to human statutes, incurs a more dreadful and inevitable doom. The perpetual and unchangeable supremacy of the divine law over all human laws and constitutions, is the instructive lesson, which the poet has bequeathed, to the ages, in this immortal drama.

¹ Cf Hickok's *Moral Philos.* Part Second, Chap. VIII.

The *Antigone* is the only drama of Sophocles, we might almost say the only poem of ancient Greece (leaving brief lyrics out of the question), in which love between the sexes — pure, unwedded love, like that which forms the staple of modern poetry and romance — holds any important place. And here it is not the cardinal point in the plot, or the main-spring of the action. It is not even the sole cause of the suicide of Haemon. The unnatural cruelty and injustice of his father furnishes the immediate impulse to that fatal act. And *Antigone*, the heroine of the play, while she bewails her virginity with a tragic pathos worthy of Jephtha's daughter, and a frankness little in accordance with modern notions of female delicacy, never once alludes to the young prince to whom she had been betrothed. This suggests one of the most remarkable contrasts between the literature of ancient and modern times. Is the controlling power of woman in modern society, and the never-failing charm of love in modern literature — is it owing to race, or to religion? Is it the offspring of Teutonic blood, or is it the fruit of Christianity, elevating the sex, purifying the relation, frowning on unchastity with a severity of which we find no trace among Greeks or barbarians, and appropriating purity and fidelity in the marriage state as the sacred symbol of the union between Christ and the church, and of the normal relation between God and the human soul? ¹

Oedipus Tyrannus.

The two *Oedipuses* and *Antigone* are so closely connected in the subject matter, in the characters, and in the continued operation of the same moral causes, that some have even called them a *trilogy*; though it is quite certain that they were composed at wide intervals of time, and not performed together; the *Antigone*, which is the last in the supposed trilogy, having been written the earliest of all the extant tragedies of Sophocles, the *Oedipus Tyrannus* about the middle, and the *Oedipus Coloneus* the last, and not exhibited

¹ Compare *Antig.* 909 seq., where *Antigone* sets the fraternal tie above the filial or the conjugal, with *Eph.* 5: 25—31, and even with such passages of the Old Testament, as *Gen.* 2: 24.

on the stage till after the death of the poet. Following the order of time and causation, in the connected series, we should have reserved the *Antigone* to the last. But *Antigone* so resembles *Electra*, that we could speak of it most easily and concisely in that connection. And the two *Oedipuses* form a *bilogy* (if we may be allowed the coinage of a convenient though unauthorized word), so complete in itself and so in harmony with the concluding epoch of the poet's life, that we cannot consent to let even *Antigone* come after them in our analysis.

The preliminary history of *Oedipus* is too familiar to require repetition. Doomed before his conception to be the murderer of his father, and thus the avenger of the crimes of his ancestors; begotten by that father in the recklessness of intoxication, against a solemn resolution not to approach his mother; exposed immediately after his birth, by that mother, in the mountains and forests of *Cithaeron*; found there by one of the shepherds of the king of *Corinth*, whose wife, being childless, prevailed upon her husband to adopt him as their son; brought up till manhood as heir-apparent to the *Corinthian* throne; fleeing his adopted home to avoid the doom (revealed to him by an oracle) of killing his supposed parent and, in that very flight, falling in with his real father, and, in a quarrel by the way, unintentionally putting him to death; coming to *Thebes* just in time to rescue the city from the devouring *Sphinx*, and receive the kingdom as a free gift at the hands of the grateful people; honored with the hand, in marriage, of the late queen, and blessed(?), by her, with sons and daughters; reigning with wisdom and in the hearts of a willing and obedient people, who look up to him as their father — down to the opening scene of the tragedy he is, in his own estimation and to all human appearance, among the most fortunate of men.

But the wisdom which baffled the *Sphinx* and saved the people, is not sufficient to baffle the *Fates* and save himself. Every step he has taken to escape his destiny, has only brought him nearer to his inevitable doom. Every round of the ladder by which he has climbed to the throne, is stained,

though unawares to himself, with blood and crime. His very prosperity has not only awakened the jealousy of the gods, but it has, in some measure, hardened his own heart; so that he will not go down, altogether innocent and undeserving, to his ruin. All the critics, from Aristotle downwards, have remarked the consummate skill with which the poet has adjusted the character of Oedipus: with so large a measure of good in it as to enlist our sympathy strongly in his misfortunes, yet not so free from the taint of pride and evil passion that our moral sentiments are shocked, when we see him suffer. He is neither a god nor a demon. *Mentem mortalia tangunt.* And as we behold this solver of enigmas and saviour of his people, this imperfect yet, on the whole, wise and good king, drawn as if by fascination within the circle of the destroyer; like the parent bird, moved at first by love of her offspring, then fluttering with fear, and finally screaming with anguish, but still by all her fluttering and fear borne continually nearer the fatal centre — as we see every measure which he uses to gain light involving him in thicker darkness, and every struggle which he makes to extricate himself plunging him deeper in the mire — we behold a striking illustration of the doctrine of holy writ, that “the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God stronger than men.” We see, also, one of those examples of imputed guilt, of hereditary crime and calamity, which are not unfrequent in the history of the world, which the scriptures describe as the visiting of the iniquities of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of those that hate God, and which, however mysterious, however apparently irreconcilable with our ideas of divine justice, in themselves considered, manifestly serve an important purpose in the natural government of the world, by the fearful lessons which they teach of the evil consequences of sin as affecting, perchance, generations yet unborn; and, if our sense of justice is offended, it is at least partially reconciled by the intuitive conviction that, so far as there is partial injustice to any individual, it will, sooner or later, meet with full reparation — that the *Oedipus Tyrannus* will be followed by the *Oedipus Coloneus*, if not in this life, yet surely in the next.

A wasting pestilence has fallen upon the city Thebes (as we learn from the opening dialogue between Oedipus and the priest of Zeus), which is consuming the fruits of the earth, the herds of cattle, and the race of men, and enriching Hades with groans and lamentations. The people instinctively impute it to the anger of the gods; for unsophisticated minds are at the farthest possible remove from that philosophical scepticism, or atheistic materialism, which severs natural from all connection with moral causes; and with their religious leaders they betake themselves, with prayers and offerings, to the altars especially of Zeus, Athena, and Apollo. They gather in crowds, with suppliant branches, about the altar in front of the palace, and look to their king (the very person who is the occasion of their sufferings — affecting picture of human ignorance and helplessness!) as, next to the gods and under their teaching, able to find some way of reconciliation and deliverance :

Ἄνδρῶν δὲ πρῶτον ἔν τε συμφοραῖς βίου
Κρίνοντες, ἔν τε δαιμόνων ἔναλλαγαῖς.¹ — (83-4)

Oedipus comes forth and assures them of his sympathy, nay his sleepless anxiety, and informs them that he has already sent his brother-in-law, Creon, to the Pythian oracle to learn what he must do; and when he learns, he will not fail to do it. While he yet speaks, Creon appears crowned with laurel, and announces as the will of the god, that they must remove the polluting curse of the land (*μῖασμα χώρας*, 97), by exiling the murderers of Laius, or expiating his blood by shedding theirs (*φόνῳ φόνου πάλιν λύοντας*, 100). After making some inquiry into the facts attending the murder (which took place just before the affair of the Sphinx, as he learns without once being reminded of his own slaying a royal personage at that time), Oedipus responds that, with the help of Apollo, he will do all in his power to avenge, at once, the land and the god; and he will labor to disperse the de-

¹ The same word so often used in the scriptures to denote reconciliation to God.

filament (*μύσος*, 138), for his own sake also ; though he little suspects how nearly it concerns himself. The chorus, aged and venerable men, trembling at the unknown import of the oracle (which they call the oracle of Zeus, though proceeding from the healing Delian god at Delphi), invoke the interposition of Athena, Artemis, and Apollo, triple averters of death (*τριῶσσι ἀλεξίμοροι*, 163), also father Zeus and Bacchus, the patron-god of Thebes, to *smite* Ares, the fire-bearing god,¹ and drive him from the country. This choral prayer ended, Oedipus makes proclamation of his intentions, inviting all who have any knowledge of the murder to make it known, with the assurance that, if guilty themselves, they shall, in that case, suffer only exile ; but denouncing the direst woes on the man who should harbor the murderer ; even though himself should be the man :

This man, whoe'er he be, let none that owns
Our sceptre and our sway, presume to grant
The shelter of a house ; let none accost him ;
Let none associate with him in the vows
And victims of the gods, or sprinkle o'er him
The lustral stream ; let all, from every roof,
Chase far the dire pollution, as the word
Of Phoebus, by his oracle, enjoined. — (236—243)
Yea, on myself, if, conscious of the deed,
I grant the wretch asylum in my house,
The same dread curse, in all its vengeance, fall.² — (249—51)

But to those who coöperate with him in the discovery, may the allied Justice (*Dike*) and all the gods ever grant their favoring presence.

The chorus, thus laid under a curse (*ἀραϊόν*, 276), declare their ignorance of the deed, and advise Oedipus, in this matter known only to the gods, to have recourse to the seer Tiresias, the royal seer, whose vision is most nearly the same with that of royal Phoebus (*ἀνακτ' ἀνακτι ταῦδ' ὀράωντ'*,³ 284).

¹ The priest of Zeus calls the Pestilence by the same name, *πυρφόρος θεός*, 27.

² In his fatal blindness, as if possessed by some higher power, and compelled in mockery to foreshadow with his own lips the whole dreadful future, he says that he will toil for Laius, as for his own father.

³ Cf. Dan. 5:11: "Wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, was found in him," etc.

Oedipus replies, that in this, too, he has already anticipated their suggestion, and sent two messengers for the prophet. The prophet soon arrives. The king addresses him with the utmost reverence, as one who revolves (literally, dispenses—*νομῶν*,¹ 300) everything on earth and in heaven, the only guardian and preserver of the state, and intreats him to disclose his knowledge, whether derived from birds or by any other method of divination, and so deliver the city. The whole dreadful truth seems to flash at once upon the mind of the prophet. He deplores the possession of wisdom that is not profitable to the possessor, as the prophets of the Old Testament and the New found the book of prophecy bitter in their souls,² and begs to be sent home at once, since it will be better, both for him and the king. Oedipus, seconded by the chorus, adjures him not to withhold the knowledge he possesses. Tiresias charges them with folly, and refuses. Oedipus is at length provoked, and declares his suspicion, that the prophet himself was an accomplice in the deed. The prophet turns instantly upon him, pronounces *him* the unhallowed polluter (*ἀνοσίγω μιάστορι*, 353) of the land, and bids him execute on *himself* his dreadful curse. Oedipus threatens punishment for such treasonable words. Tiresias replies, that he has nothing to fear, if there is any power in truth:

Εἴπερ τί γ' ἐστὶ τῆς ἀληθείας σθένος. — (369)

The king taunts the prophet with utter blindness of the mind as well as all the senses. The prophet answers, that that reproach will soon return, with all its force, upon the king. The king says, a blind man cannot harm him. The prophet answers, it is not a blind man he has to fear; but Apollo, whose concern it is, can maintain the credit of his own oracles.

Oedipus, who seems honestly to regard his wisdom and his

¹ As if "the man of God," were in the place of God himself, and did what he predicted, cf. Jer. 1:10; I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out and to pull down and to destroy, and to throw down, to build and to plant.

² Cf. Ezek. 2:10; Jer. 20:14—18; Rev. 10:10.

power, both so soon to fail him, as objects of envy to those around him, charges Tiresias with being suborned by Creon, at whose instance he had sent for him, and inquires, where the boasted wisdom of the prophet was when he, the ignorant Oedipus, solved the riddle of the Sphinx. Tiresias now throws off all restraint, declares that he is a servant of Loxias, not of Oedipus or Creon, and predicts in full, though still in somewhat enigmatical terms, the woes that are soon to overwhelm Oedipus and his family, bereft, blinded, and driven from the land by the *δεινόπους Ἄρα* of his own father and mother. At the same time he throws out incidental hints touching his parentage, which, with all his skill in solving enigmas, Oedipus cannot understand.

The prophet gone, the chorus take up something of his spirit, and exult over the now certain and speedy punishment of the murderer, overtaken and overwhelmed by the *ever-living, hovering* oracles that proceed from Delphi, centre of the earth, by the unerring Fates (*Κήρες ἀναπλάκητοι*, 472), and by the son of Jove armed with fire and lightnings; though they are still slow to accept any intimations against their sovereign, who had been found so wise and friendly to the state in the matter of the Sphinx.

In the ensuing interview between Oedipus and Creon, the monarch carries his suspicions, or rather his charges and threats, to such a height of injustice, as to prepare, and in some measure reconcile, the spectators to his fall. Jocasta, the wife of Oedipus and the sister of Creon, interposes to allay their strife. The choir also, or the choir-leader in its behalf, takes part in the dialogue, and begs of Oedipus not to charge with crimes unproved a friend "who calls the gods to witness for his truth;" but to reverence him who, before, was not a child, and now is *great*, since he is *under oath*¹ (680 seq.). The king goes so far as to reflect upon the loyalty of the chorus. The choir-leader calls the sun, the god, leader of all gods (*πάντων θεῶν θεὸν πρόμον*), to witness

¹ This idea of being bound by an oath or curse is expressed in three different ways in the connection, *ἐν δρκῳ*, 653; *ἀραῖος*, 644; *ἐναγῆ*, 656.

his innocence, praying that he may perish without god and without friend (*ἀθεος ἀφίλος*, 661), if he harbors an unloyal thought. The king at length yields the life of Creon to the intreaties of Jocasta and the chorus, but still hates him and frowns him from his presence in an unforgiving spirit, which elicits from Creon the prophetic answer :

Even in relenting art thou stern ; thy wrath,
Too far indulged, most fearful. Souls like thine
Are the just authors of their own remorse. — (673-5)

In the endeavor to pacify her husband, Jocasta proceeds to show how little reliance can be placed on any pretended oracles among men, by relating the oracle which had predicted that Laius should fall by his own son ; whereas, their only son had been left to die, in infancy, on the mountains, and Laius had fallen by the hand of foreigners, where three ways met. This incidental, chance allusion to *three ways*, awakens, at length, the recollections and the fears of Oedipus ; and thus her own lips confirm the truth of the oracle in the very attempt to prove it false. On further inquiry, the time and place are found to agree with his own encounter on the way to Thebes. The description of Laius and his attendants, also, answers to his own recollections ; and a slave, sole survivor of the train, who, at his own earnest request when Oedipus was crowned, had been allowed to retire to some rural charge, is sent for to make the matter sure. Meanwhile Oedipus relates to his wife his early history at Corinth, his flight from home to avoid the killing of his parent, and his encounter, at the three corners between Corinth and Thebes, trembling the while with apprehension, lest he had, unwittingly, pronounced upon himself a dreadful curse. But Jocasta still blindly insists, that even if Laius fell by the hand of Oedipus, he could not have fallen by the hand of his own son ; so that the oracle, she argues with bitter and impious madness, is false at any rate, and unworthy of the slightest regard ; to which conclusion the deluded Oedipus also gives, at least, a partial assent (*καλῶς νομίζεις*, 859). But the chorus, so far from falling in with this sceptical reasoning, gives utterance to these lofty strains, in vindication of eternal truth and eternal law :

O, be the lot forever mine
 Unsullied to maintain,
 In act and word, with awe divine,
 What potent laws ordain.
 Laws spring from purer realms above :
 Their father is the Olympian Jove.
 Ne'er shall oblivion veil their front sublime,
 Th' indwelling god is great, nor dreads the waste of time :

Μέγας ἐν ταύτοις θεός
Οὐδέ γηράσκει. — (863-72)

And this sublime strophe is followed by a full and dark picture of the daring impiety that will universally prevail, if men lose their reverence for divine truth and justice, ending in the concise and expressive line :

**Ἐρῶει δὲ τὰ θεῶν. — (910)*

Overcome by the fears of her lord, which she cannot allay, Jocasta goes to the altar of Apollo, with garlands and incense, and prays the god to bring them some righteous deliverance. But when a messenger arrives from Corinth announcing the death of Polybus, the supposed father of Oedipus, the evil spirit of unbelief and impiety returns upon her with increased violence :

Vain oracles !

Where are your bodings now ? My Oedipus,
 Fearing to slay this man, forsook his country :
 Now Fate, and not his hand, hath laid him low. (946-9)

And Oedipus again falls into the same snare, into which his Eve has already fallen before him :

Ha ! is it thus ? Then, lady, who would heed
 The Pythian shrine oracular, or birds
 Clanging in air, by whose vain auspices
 I was foredoomed the murderer of my father ? — (964 seq.)

The unhappy pair are now ripe for ruin. From these heights of presumption they are to be hurled, in a moment, to the depths of despair ; and the very messenger who has raised them to such a pitch of exaltation, is to dash their

hopes and occasion their fall. In order to relieve Oedipus of his only remaining fear, which is that he may yet defile the bed of his mother, the messenger informs Oedipus that he is not, in reality, the son of Polybus, but a foundling, whom he himself (the messenger) had rescued from an ignominious and cruel death, on the mountains of Citheron, to which rescue his very name (*Oιδίπους*, or he of the swollen feet) bore testimony. Jocasta now sees, at a glance, the whole dreadful truth, and adjures her husband to investigate no further. But he is bent upon solving the mystery of his birth, which tortured him in former years, and insists on seeing the herdsman who had delivered the exposed infant into the hands of the Corinthian; and *she* goes away, in silence and despair, to put an end to her own life. The herdsman comes. It is the same aged servant who, when Oedipus was crowned, had fled the court in the vain hope of concealing the dreadful fact of which his breast was the sole repository. Between the chattering Corinthian and the frantic Oedipus, his secret is extorted from him. Oedipus sees the frightful gulf of infamy and ruin which yawns before him, and prays for darkness to hide it from him :

Woe! woe! 'tis all too fatally unveiled.
 Thou light! O may I now behold thy beams
 For the last time! Unhallowed was my birth,
 In closest ties united, where such ties
 Were most unnatural; with that blood defiled
 From whose pollution most the heart recoils. — (1182-5)

And then he leaves the stage.

The chorus bewail the sad destiny of mankind, "of vanity and woe combined," and deplore the fall of the sphinx-vanquishing Oedipus from the proudest height of earthly wisdom and glory to the lowest depth of ignominy, horror, and despair. A messenger now appears and gives a detailed account of the suicide of Jocasta, and of Oedipus, over her dead body, tearing out his own eyes with her golden clasps :

That never, never more
 Her should they see, the sufferings he endured,
 Or the dire deeds he wrought. — (1271-4)

And while the messenger is yet speaking, Oedipus, having burst the palace gate, shows himself to public view, as the guilty murderer of his father, mother, and all his house; and when asked, by the sympathizing chorus, what god impelled him to such violence on himself, he replies:

'T was Phoebus, Phoebus, O my friends, above,
Who wrought my doom of woe,
My hopeless agony:
But this dark deed no hand save mine hath dared. — (1329-33)

The chorus intimate that he might better have died at once, than pine in darkness. But he answers, that he could not endure the sight of his father and mother in the lower world:

Descending to the dead, I know not how
I could have borne to gaze upon my sire,
Or my unhappy mother; for to them
Crimes dark as mine not death can e'er atone. — (1371-4)

Oedipus is now, morally and politically, dead. The throne is, *ipso facto*, vacated, as palpably, as immediately, as if the king had deceased; and the wronged and suspected Creon succeeds to the sovereignty. Of him, who comes not to insult the fallen monarch, but to remove him to the palace from the public gaze, and from the light of the sun, Oedipus asks but one boon — exile. Taught, by his predecessor's fall, to respect the oracle, Creon replies, that he must first ask the pleasure of the god. Oedipus now bethinks him of his daughters, commends them to the care of Creon, and, when suffered to place his hands upon them, blesses Creon for the privilege, and breathes out his love and sorrow — sorrow for their inheritance of shame — in tones of disinterested and pathetic tenderness, which melt the heart of the spectator. Yielding to necessity, he now retires within the palace, to await the disposal of the ruling powers on earth and in heaven; and the chorus express the moral of the tragedy in these concluding words, addressed to their fellow citizens:

Sons of Thebes, my native city, this great Oedipus survey,
Who resolved the famed enigma, who for virtue far renowned,

Nought of favor reeked or fortune, with transcendent glory crowned.
 Mark him now dismayed, degraded, tost on waves of wildest woe.
 Think on this, short-sighted mortal, and till life's deciding close,
 Dare not pronounce thy fellow truly happy, truly blest,
 Till, the bounds of life passed over, yet unharmed, he sinks to rest.

God alone is happy, God alone is wise, God alone is great, God alone is good. This seems to be the moral and religious lesson, expressed in the language of Christian piety which the Oedipus is intended to inculcate : Not only is human power weakness, and human wisdom folly, but all human good is evil in comparison with the divine standard. Oedipus is an object of felicitation and envy in the eyes of men. He is the wise man of his age. But when he sets himself in opposition to the oracles of Apollo and strives to defeat the plans and purposes of heaven, we are astonished at the blindness and infatuation which mark his course. He is a good man in the view of the world. His people love and honor him as a good king ; but, in his mysterious providence, the deity " plunges him in the ditch, and his own clothes abhor him." He finds himself stained with involuntary crimes, and loathes himself for his imputed guilt. To-day, like Job, he sits on the throne, the greatest of all the kings and princes of the age ; to-morrow, like Job, he sits in ashes, bereft of his power and forsaken by his friends, pitied if not despised by all who were wont to do him reverence. In the Oedipus at Colonus, we shall see whether, like Job, he in the end receives the double of all his former prosperity. Certainly, in his terrible fall, we see the same apparently blind, all-controlling, irresistible power, which men call destiny, and which even Christians call mysterious and inscrutable providence.

Oedipus at Colonus.

With our sympathies thus enlisted in the fate of Oedipus, we are now prepared to follow him to the last scene of his life at Colonus. An interval of some years has passed away ; his sons have grown up ; the younger is in possession of his throne ; the older, at the head of confederate armies, is marching to possess himself, by force, of the birthright which has

been wrested from him ; his daughters, also, have arrived at maturity, and, while both serve as props of his declining years, and eyes for him in his blindness, Antigone already manifests that peculiar fervor of feeling and strength, which are more conspicuously displayed in the drama bearing her name, and which have rendered that name immortal. The Oedipus Coloneus is a natural sequel to the Oedipus Tyrannus. But there is more of contrast than of resemblance in the incidents, and in the situation of the leading character who gives name to both. The one is the compensation of the other. If fortune, or the fates, or the gods, or the laws of the universe (different names, in Greek, for essentially the same thing), or, to use an expression of our author, which harmonizes and combines them all, if *the god in them* (*ἐν τοῦτοις θεοῖς*, Oed. Tyr. 871) has heretofore dealt hardly with Oedipus, he is now to receive his compensation. If the sins of his ancestors have involved him, more through ignorance and necessity than of his own free will, in an unequal controversy with higher powers, he is now reconciled and blessed with a departure from these scenes of earthly conflict, amid supernatural tokens of divine favor. If Creon and his own sons have treated him selfishly and cruelly, in the days of his humiliation, the sceptre of more than regal power is now in his hands ; and it is now their turn to solicit and plead in vain. If his native city, Thebes, has too soon forgotten his services, and ungratefully banished him from the realm, she now supplicates in vain, and endeavors to compel his return ; while Athens, which grants him an asylum in his apparent helplessness, has thus, unconsciously, reared for herself a bulwark in her suburbs, which her enemies shall never pass.

The Oedipus Coloneus of Sophocles brings us to the same asylum of human law, and the sanctuary of the same divinities, as the Eumenides of Aeschylus. Oedipus in the former, like Orestes in the latter, comes to the sanctuary of the Furies at Athens for rest from his weary wanderings, for expiation of his involuntary crimes, for reconciliation to the retributive and avenging powers. Orestes is welcomed and protected by Athena, the patron-goddess of the city ; Oedipus,

by Theseus, its demigod hero and king. Athena summons the elders of her people to a court and council, and so institutes the Areopagus. Theseus takes counsel of the priests and at the altars of the gods. In both poets, the proceeding is partly civil and partly religious. In both, the human and the divine, the powers of earth and the powers of heaven conspire to effect a reconciliation. In Aeschylus, the furies appear, in person, in that fiendlike form which we always associate with the name, pursue their victim like hounds hunting their prey, dance in chorus around him, and howl their curses on his head. In Sophocles, in accordance with the advancing refinement of the age, and under the guidance of his own cultivated genius, they are invisible, and their dreadful power is only shadowed forth by the suppressed breath with which their name is mentioned, and the shuddering horror with which the beholders see Oedipus unwittingly invade their sanctuary. But in both, the vengeful powers are appeased, the *Erinyes* are transformed into the *Eumenides*, the wrathful deities into the gracious ones. And, as in the *Eumenides* of Aeschylus, they are conducted to their sanctuary with songs and rejoicings, by the magistrates and the whole people; so, in the *Oedipus Coloneus*, all nature sympathizes with the calm and sweet peace which has succeeded to the storm: the olive and the vine spring up, in unwonted beauty about the sanctuary of the appeased Furies, and the nightingale sings perpetually in the branches. Of course, neither the spectators in the ancient theatre, nor the poet himself, saw, in these conceptions, all the breadth and depth of meaning, which we find in them. They were "unconscious prophecies" — "shadows of good things," which could be fully understood only when the Substance had come, and the True Light shone upon the world. But we cannot but see, in them, ideas, or germs of ideas, of profound moral and spiritual significance. Perhaps the primary aim of the poet was, in the language of Schlegel,¹ "to confer glory on Athens, as the sacred abode of law and humanity, where the crimes of the illustrious families of other countries might, by a higher

¹ Lectures on Dramatic Literature, Lec. IV.

mediation, be at last propitiated; and hence an enduring prosperity was predicted to the Athenian people." But, as Schlegel himself confesses, "when the rancor of these goddesses of rage is exhausted, it seems as if the whole human race were redeemed from their power."

At the opening of the drama, Oedipus is seen, aged and blind, leaning on the arm of Antigone, and entering the suburbs of Athens. The scene is thus described by her who is at once the staff and the eyes of her father :

O Oedipus,

My much afflicted father, the high towers
Which girt the city, rise in distant view ;
The spot on which we stand, I deem, is holy.
Where laurels, olives, vines, in one green shade,
Are close inwoven ; and within the grove,
The nightingales make frequent melody.
Rest, now, thy faltering limbs on this rude stone.
Such lengthened wanderings ill befit thine age. — (14-20)

Scarcely has he taken his seat, when he is warned to remove his feet, for it is holy ground, and must not be profaned by mortal footsteps :

"Ἐξελεῖθ', ἔχεις γὰρ χώρον οὐκ ἄγνόν πατεῖν. — (37)

From mortal touch and mortal dwelling pure,¹
Is that mysterious grove ; the awful Powers,²
Daughters of Earth and Darkness, dwell within.

Oed. By what most holy name should I invoke them ?

Athen. We call them, in this land, th' Eumenides,
The all-beholding Powers ;³ in other lands,
By various lofty title men adore them. — (39-43)

In answer to further questions, he is informed that the whole suburb is sacred to Poseidon, Prometheus, and Colonus, whose name it bears. When the Athenian with whom he holds this conversation withdraws to apprise the king, Oedipus addresses his prayers to the august powers, of dreadful aspect (*πότνιαι δεινώπες*, 84) and entreats them to receive him propitiously, in accordance with the oracle of Phoebus,

¹ ἔδικτος οὐδ' οἰκητός.

² αἱ ἑμφοβοὶ θεαί, 39.

³ πάνθ' ὀρώσας.

which had predicted that his days should at length come to a peaceful end at the hospitable abode of the venerable goddesses (θεῶν Σεμνῶν ἔδραν καὶ ξενόστασιω, 90), amid thunderings, lightnings, and earthquakes, as signs from heaven (σημεία).

As the company of aged men draw near, who constitute the chorus, Oedipus screens himself in the thickest of the grove; and they, as they search for him, sing with trembling voice :

Who, who is this sad, aged wanderer ?
 Doubtless of foreign land, or his rash foot
 Had never trod the grove
 Of those unconquered virgin Powers,¹
 Whose name we tremble but to breathe,
 Whose mystic shrine we pass
 With far-averted eye,
 And pondering, silent and devout,
 On happier omens there. — (117-34)

Oedipus comes forth at their call. With shuddering, they bid him beware, lest he bring upon himself a more dreadful curse than his present blindness; and, not daring to tread where he stands, they guide him with *words*, as he withdraws, step by step, and seats himself, again, on the sloping verge of the rocky pavement. As, in obedience to their demand, he discloses his name and race, they are still more appalled, and bid him quit the land forever. Antigone intercedes for her father, pleading for that peculiar *respect* due to the miserable, which we call *pity*, but which the Greek tragedians call *αἰδώς*.² They reply :

Know, child of Oedipus, we pity thee,
 Nor gaze, relentless, on thy woe-worn sire ;
 But we revere the gods, nor dare rescind
 The firm decision of our former mandate. (254-7)

Oedipus responds by appealing to the far-famed piety³ and

¹ ἄμμαιμακέταν κορῶν.

² 247. Cf. Aesch. Sup. 577 δακρύων πένθιμον αἰδῶ : tears of sorrow and pity (respect).

³ τὰς γ' Ἀθήνας φασὶ θεοσεβειστάτας εἶναι, 260. So below, 1006, Oedipus says, if

humanity of Athens: vain boast, if a stranger is to be thus inhumanly banished for a name; palliates his crimes as committed in *retaliation* and in ignorance, and adjures them by the gods, whom they profess to venerate, to spare him now that, in obedience to their will, he has withdrawn himself from the inner sanctuary of the Eumenides. Overcome at length by entreaties, and overawed by something supernatural in the air and words of the mysterious stranger, they consent to wait the final sentence of their king.

Meanwhile Ismene, Antigone's gentle sister, arrives from Thebes, bringing news of the furious war which her brothers are waging for the throne; of a recent oracle which declared that he (Oedipus) whose downfall the gods had formerly willed, but whom now they purpose to exalt, holds in his hands the balance of power and victory; and that, for this reason Creon is already on his way to bear him back to the *borders* of the State, that they may hold this now powerful arbiter in their possession, though they are still resolved that his tomb shall not defile Theban ground. The indignation of Oedipus is roused by this new insult, added to the long neglect and injury with which he has been treated by his sons; and he imprecates destruction on them both, while he promises lasting benefit to Athens, if her citizens, with her tutelary gods, will now stand forth for his protection. Drawn towards him now by patriotism as well as compassion, the chorus instruct him how to propitiate (*θέσσαι καθαρμὸν*, 466) the Eumenides: first, with three libations of honey and pure water, *without wine*, poured out upon the ground towards the rising sun; then, with thrice nine olive branches, fresh-plucked and planted on the spot which drank the libations; and then, to offer this prayer:

Propitious, so we call them, that, with minds
Propitious, they their votary would receive
And save. — (486-7)

any land knows how to honor and worship the gods, Athens excels in this. This explains the *δεισιδαιμονεστέρους* in Paul's address to the Athenians on Mars' Hill. Acts 17:22. Xenophon (Cyr. III. 3, 58) uses *δεισιδαίμονες* as a synonym with *θεοσεβείς*.

Too blind and infirm to perform these rites himself, he devolves the duty on Ismene.

While the chorus are extracting from his reluctant lips some further confession of his calamities and involuntary crimes, Theseus arrives, and without waiting for petitions or any address, assures at once the anxious heart of the suppliant stranger with these comforting words :

Unfold thy wish : and arduous were th' emprise,
When thou should'st ask my utmost aid in vain.
I, too, was nurtured in a foreign land,
As thou art now ; an exile's woes, to me,
An exile's perils, are familiar all.
Then never, never, from the stranger's prayer,
Who comes like thee, relentless will I turn,
Or needful aid withhold. — (560-6)

With the humility and yet the majesty befitting the double consciousness of what he is and what the gods intend to make him, Oedipus answers :

I come to offer thee this withered frame,
A gift to sight unseemly ; yet endowed
With costlier treasures than the loveliest form ; — (576-8)

adding, that the value of the boon will be understood only when he is dead, and Theseus has attended to his burial. Previous to that, he has nothing to ask but protection against his unnatural sons and his ungrateful countrymen, who would fain bear him back by force, where once he would gladly have remained ; but where, now, he is resolved never more to return. Theseus expostulates with him on the folly of such resentment, in such wretchedness. But Oedipus is unrelenting. Athens is now his home and country ; and when war shall arise, between Athens and Thebes, as war will rise in the changeful course of human destiny, though now all is peace :

Then this cold body, in the sleep of death
Entombed, shall drink their¹ warm and vital blood,
If Jove be mightiest still, and Jove-born Phoebus
Retain his truth unbroken.

Ei Zeús ēti Zeús, chw̄ Διὸς Φοῖβος σαφής. — (623)

¹ Of the Thebans.

Theseus pledges him protection, offering him an asylum here, or in the palace, as he chooses. "Would to heaven," he answers:

Would to heaven
I might attend thee, but the spot is here. — (644)

And when his fears return and agitate him, Theseus reäsures him, declaring that his word is as sacred as his oath; that his name, alone, will suffice to protect him from insult; and, moreover:

If Phoebus hither was indeed thy guide,
Without my feebler aid, his arm can save thee. — (664-5)

The choral song, which follows (668—719), celebrates the beauty of Colonus in strains of poetry and eloquence, which betray the poet's love and admiration for his birth-place; and which, at the same time, remind the Christian reader of the glowing language in which the Hebrew prophets describe rejoicing nature under the reign of the coming Messiah.¹ We will not mar it by translation or synopsis. It is a glorification of Athens, which the patriotic and tasteful Athenians might well reward, as they did reward it, when he read it before his judges, by an instant acquittal and a more than regal triumph. But it seems to be also something more: piety joins with patriotism in celebrating Colonus, as not only the sanctuary of the Eumenides, but the favorite haunt of Aphrodite and the Muses (691-2), and the sacred abode of Athena, Poseidon, and Zeus:

Morian * Jove, with guardian care,
Watches, ever wakeful, there;
And Athena's eye of blue
Guards her own loved olive too.

Antigone breaks in upon the concluding strains of this magnificent song, by saying, that now the might and glory of Athens are to be put to the test. Creon approaches with his

¹ Is. 35 : v. 2 ; 35 : 12—13, etc., etc.

² That is, guardian of the *μῦραι*, or sacred Olives.

body-guard. He addresses the aged citizens of the country with respect; says he comes only to restore the wretched outcast to his native land; and then turns his intreaties, not unmixed with compassion, to the unhappy Oedipus. Oedipus scorns his pity, withheld when it would have been gladly received, and extended only when it was no longer needed. He charges Creon not only with cruelty in times past, but with false pretences now, since it was not his intention to restore him to his home, but only to take him to the border. His body shall not go there; but his spirit shall ever dwell there as an avenging demon of the land (*χώρας ἀλάστωρ οὐμὸς*, 788), and his sons shall inherit of his kingdom only soil enough to die on:

Is not my presage of the doom of Thebes,
More sure than thine; yea, tis e'en trebly sure,
As drawn from truer prophets, Phoebus' self,
And his dread sire, the all-controlling Jove. — (791-3)

Unable otherwise to bow his stubborn soul, Creon informs him that he has already seized one of his daughters (Ismene, who had gone away to prepare the offerings), and proceeds to take, by force, his only remaining support and solace. He even threatens to drag Oedipus himself from his asylum; and Oedipus defends himself by frightful curses. Summoned from the altar near by, where he had been offering a bullock to Poseidon, Theseus interposes, arrests Creon, sends forces, at once, for the recovery of the daughters, and censures, with dignified severity, the double crime, against the country and the gods, of forcing a suppliant from its altars. Creon endeavors to justify himself by expatiating on the crimes of Oedipus, which have forfeited even the right of asylum. This rouses Oedipus. He replies at much length. He confesses his crimes, but casts the responsibility on the gods (*θεοῖς γὰρ ἦν οὕτω φίλον*, 964), angry, perchance, at his race aforesaid; and he exculpates himself as only a foredoomed and involuntary murderer. How can I reasonably be held responsible for a deed which was involuntary:

Πῶς γ' ἂν τὸ γ' ἄκον πρᾶγμα' ἂν εἰκότως ψέγοις. — (977)

and not only involuntary, but decreed and predicted before I was born or even conceived (973)? questions going to the root of human accountability, which have always been asked in the world, and never fully answered.

While the king and his attendants are executing the mandates of justice, the chorus express their wish to join in the pursuit and offer prayers for the right to Phoebus, Athena, and Zeus :

Jove, Jove to-day will aid the right,
 And I forbode a prosperous fight. — (1079–80)
 Thou of the all-pervading eye,
 In heaven by subject-gods adored,¹
 Jove ! from thy radiant throne on high,
 Send might and joy and victory
 To grace my country's lord !
 Daughter of Jove, Athena, hear ;
 Thou Phoebus, lift thy fatal spear, etc. — (1085–91)

The daughters are soon brought back, and Oedipus clasps them to his bosom. Theseus informs him, that some person, kindred to him, is sitting at the altar of Poseidon, who begs the privilege of a few words with Oedipus. From the description, Oedipus recognizes his son Polynices, and at first refuses to see him. But the remonstrances of Theseus and the intreaties of Antigone, pleading not only the ties of nature but reverence for the gods, prevail to win his reluctant consent. Polynices enters, alone, and in tears, deploring the misery he sees, confessing the wrong of which he has been guilty, and pleading for forgiveness :

By the throne
 Of mighty Jove, associate of his sway,
 Sits gentle Mercy, judge of human deeds ;
 Let her be present to thy soul, my father.
 Ἄλλ', ἔστι γὰρ καὶ Ζηνὶ σύνθακος θρόνων
 Αἰδῶς ἐπ' ἔργοις πᾶσι, καὶ πρὸς σοὶ, πάτερ,
 Παρασταθῆτω.² — (1266–9).

¹ *τῶν θεῶν παντάρχῃ Ζεῦ παντόπτα*, κ. τ. λ. 1085.

² See what is said of *αἰδῶς* (mercy, pity) above, p. 79. Here she is personified, or rather regarded as a goddess, the sharer of the throne of the supreme ; just as Justice is represented below, 1382.

Oedipus maintains an awful silence. But Antigone encourages her brother at least to make known his wishes; and he proceeds. He has been deprived of the throne, his rightful inheritance, by his younger brother. The fell cause of all their feud was the avenging curse of their father. He has married the daughter of the king of Argos and rallied, together with him, six other chiefs, a seven-fold force in all, for the recovery of his inheritance. And now he solicits his father's presence and blessing, since :

If faith be due to heaven's prophetic voice,
Whom thou shalt succor, them must victory grace. — (1331,2)

For a long time, Oedipus deigns no answer. But at length his resentment and indignation burst forth in reproaches and curses too frightful to repeat, too dreadful for a son to hear from a father's lips. Neither of his sons shall possess his throne. The blood of both shall stain the plain of Thebes. Such were the curses which he pronounced upon them before; and now he invokes, again, the Curses to come as his allies, and teach his sons not to dishonor their parents. *They* therefore (the *Curses*, 'Απαί) shall occupy the throne, which else had been his sons', *if ancient Justice sits associate with Zeus and guardian of primeval laws* :

Εἴπερ ἔστιν ἡ παλαίφατος
Δίκη ξύνεδρος¹ Ζηνὸς ἀρχαίους νόμους. — (1381,2)

Thus I curse thee, he concludes in language more dreadful than the curses of king Lear, *thus I curse thee; and I invoke the gloomy paternal darkness of Tartarus*,² *to remove thee hence*

¹ Quite another sharer of Jove's throne from the Mercy (Αἰδώς), to whom Polynices makes his appeal (1268, see p. 84.) The epithet παλαίφατος is applied especially to *Justice*, as here; to *Oracles*, 454; and to *Providence* Trach. 825: τὰς παλαίφατου προνοίας, and means literally *spoken long ago*. The *primeval law* especially intended in this connection must be that of *honor to parents*. Cf. Theol. of Aesch. pp. 360—384. Bib. Sac. April, 1859.

² τοῦ Ταρτάρου στυγρὴν πατρῶν Ἔρεβος. The meaning of πατρῶν, *paternal*, is doubtful, some understanding *Erebus* to be represented as the father or guardian of *Tartarus*; and others (as Hermann and Wunder), supposing it to mean the darkness, that envelops Laius, *father* of Oedipus.

to thine own place ;¹ and I invoke these goddesses, the Furies ; and I invoke Ares, who inspired you with fearful hate. (1389-92.)

Horrible as these curses are, the chorus take it for granted that they will be fulfilled to the letter. Polynices bows, in despair, to his fate, and goes away resolved not to acquaint his confederates with his doom ; but in silence to meet, with them, his destiny, asking only of his sisters, that when he has fallen, he may not be robbed of interment with proper funeral rites. Antigone utters not a word of remonstrance against the maledictions of her father ; but, with true sisterly tenderness, beseeches her brother not to return to the war, since if he does, those maledictions — oracles she calls them (*μαντεύματα*, 1425) — will come upon him as sure as the decrees of fate.

Now (as if, in giving utterance to these prophetic curses on the last male offspring of his accursed race, he had fulfilled his earthly destiny) Jove's thunders begin to peal, in fearful echoes, over his head. He recognizes them as the appointed signal of his death, and sends, in haste, to Theseus. The chorus, overwhelmed with fear and amazement, betake themselves to prayer. Theseus comes, calm yet full of sympathy, to receive the last counsels and benedictions of Oedipus. Oedipus summons him to follow *him* (for the blind is now to be the guide of the seeing) to the spot where he is to die. That spot, never to be named to any human being, will afford a surer defence than spears and shields. There, also, he will disclose to his royal ear secrets which he would not reveal to his dearest friend, and which Theseus must communicate only to his successor, as he draws near the end of life. These secrets will render Athens impregnable against the Thebans. And now, led by an unseen hand (*Ἐρμῆς ὁ πομπὸς, ἧ τε νεπέτρα θεός*, 1548), leading his daughters and the king of Athens towards the mysterious spot, he passes off the stage, while the chorus, trembling with awe and almost doubting if it is right to invoke the infernal deities, beseech

¹ Ἀποικίῃ, lit. to remove from home to a colony or other residence. Plato uses it of the transfer to the Islands of the blest. Rep. 5196.

Pluto, Proserpine, the Eumenides, and Cerberus himself, to grant the stranger an open (*ἐν καθάρῳ*, clear, 1575) and peaceful entrance to the regions below, that he may *thus* be recompensed for the many sufferings which, without his fault (*μάταν*, 1565), may have come upon him.

This prayer ended, a messenger enters and narrates, at length, the death of Oedipus: Having arrived *at the threshold* of the *steep descent* (*τὸν καταβράκτην ὄδον*, sc. "Αιδου, 1590), with the help of his daughter he bathed in pure water from the hill of Demeter, put on a new attire instead of the filthy garments of which he had divested himself; and then, summoned by the thunder of Infernal Zeus, he embraced his daughters and bade them an affectionate farewell. A brief silence ensued; and then a voice was heard, which caused the hair to stand up on the head of every one who heard it: a voice calling distinctly for Oedipus to hasten his departure. Commending his daughters to the care of Theseus, he now sends them away, with all attendants, and was left alone with the Athenian king. As soon as the messenger and those with him had recovered from their awe sufficiently to look behind them, the king was seen standing alone and holding his hand over his eyes, as if to shade them from some sight too fearful to behold, and, soon after, worshipping in one and the same prayer the powers of heaven and earth (*γῆν τε ἅμα καὶ τὸν θεῶν Ὀλυμπον*, 1655). But what became of *him*, the wonderful, the illustrious stranger, no mortal knew but Theseus. He was not struck by the thunderbolt, nor swept into the sea, nor wasted by pain and sickness; some god conducted him away, or the earth opened its *kind* bosom to receive him. For such a man, remarks the messenger, is not to be mourned, but if any one is to be admired and envied in his death, that man is Oedipus.

The daughters now reappear, bewailing their loss. But Theseus forbids them to mourn for one to whom grace is reserved in the lower world (*χάρις ἢ χθονία ἀπόκειται*,¹ 1753);

¹ Possibly this may mean only one who was pleased and happy in the manner of his death, though it more naturally refers to something reserved, laid up in another world.

for that were to provoke the divine displeasure (*véμεσις γνάφ*). Antigone, with characteristic ardor and fearlessness, begs to see the place of her father's death. But Theseus declares, *that* is forbidden by the charge of Oedipus himself and by the all-hearing oath (*Ὀρκος*) of Zeus, who heard what passed between them. And with true paternal kindness he unites with the chorus in comforting the orphan children, assuring them that all had happened according to the wishes of their father and the sovereign will of Jove.

Counterpart and kindred to the instinctive satisfaction with which we behold the perpetrator of many and great crimes, who has long gone unwhipped of justice, brought at length to condign punishment— counterpart and kindred to this is the pleasure with which we see the unfortunate victim of untoward circumstances and adverse fates, who, without any particular crime or fault of his own, has been involved in heavy calamities, restored to his former prosperity and standing, or in some other way compensated, and more than compensated, for all that he had suffered and lost. The former is the satisfaction afforded by *Electra*, and many other tragedies, and also by the book of *Esther*. The latter is the pleasure derived from *Oedipus* and the book of *Job*. The *Oedipus at Colonus* is a pathetic and beautiful picture of one, who had long been pursued by the avenging Furies of his own involuntary crimes and the real crimes of his father's house, finding an asylum at last in the sanctuary of those Furies appeased and reconciled— one who had been crushed beneath the weight of imputed rather than personal guilt, the power of Destiny, the injustice of men, and the apparent anger of the gods, dying in the possession of such power and estimation among men, and amid such manifestations of divine favor as fully to counterbalance all the inequalities and ills of life. The plot is manifestly constructed on the principle of such a compensation. This principle is distinctly recognized in the prayer of the chorus (1565-7).¹ *Oedipus* receives "the double" as manifestly as *Job*, though in a very different time and manner. The recompense does not come till the very hour of his departure from the present life, when,

¹ See p. 87.

of course, it cannot consist in his restoration to twice his original wealth and prosperity and kingly power. But it comes in a way no less striking and impressive. The Theban exile is invited and intreated to return to Thebes. But he refuses, and becomes a citizen and more than citizen of *Athens* — a counsellor, and no ordinary counsellor, of her demigod and founder-king. The dethroned monarch is still king, and more than king, at Thebes. He not only holds the sceptre and gives it to whom he will, but victory or defeat to the contending armies, and life or death to the opposing chiefs, hang on his lips. The neglected and despised old man, who lately wandered alone, supported only by his loving, sorrowing daughters, while all others shunned him as if smitten with leprosy or plague, departs this life amid lightnings and thunders, commotion in nature, and voices from another world, such as, according to an idea quite current among the nations of antiquity, mark the exit only of prophets, lawgivers,¹ the greatest benefactors of mankind and the special favorites of heaven.

The exaltation of Oedipus to such a height of glory, is almost as mysterious as his fall. The poet does not enter into the philosophy of it. He only gives us the facts. He sheds no light on the ground of the reconciliation. And as to the character of Oedipus, it is no better at Colonus than at Thebes. Certainly he is no saint according to the standard of the New Testament, or even of the Old. He is almost as far from the meekness and godly fear of Moses, as he is from the loving and forgiving spirit of Christ. He is almost as ignorant of himself, as he is of the character and government of God; and his views of sin are as inadequate as his ideas of redemption and reconciliation. He is as unconscious of his personal need of forgiveness, as he is destitute of the gospel requisites to be forgiven. How impersonal and impalpable are his conceptions of the powers above and the powers beneath! Near and peculiar as the

¹ This idea meets its realization in the mysterious death and burial of Moses, Deut. 34 : 1—6. So far from militating against the *reality*, the *idea* confirms it — leads us to *anticipate* it so that we should be *disappointed* if there were no answering fact in the scriptures.

relations are into which he is brought to them, how little is there that is clear, and how much less that is attractive and endearing about them! How dark and cold, how dim and distant, is the view of death and the passage to another world, which we get in this nearest approach that Greek tragedy ever made towards a revelation of that passage, when compared with that which the Christian obtains, as he stands by the cross of the penitent and forgiven thief, and hears the promise: "This day shalt thou be with me in paradise;" or as he looks on at the stoning of Stephen, and sees heaven opened and the dying martyr, like his dying Lord, praying for the forgiveness of his enemies, and then rising, almost visibly, to the immediate presence of his Saviour, saying: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

Longinus cites, as a fine example of the sublime, the scene where Oedipus suddenly disappears, and Theseus remains alone, gazing after him with his hands over his eyes, which are almost blinded by the awful spectacle. In a poetical and critical point of view, the passage deserves all the critic's commendation. But scenes of more spiritual sublimity and at the same time scenes of sweet and serene beauty, in which heaven is brought down to earth, and God comes nearer to the presence, clearer to the vision and infinitely dearer to the hearts of men, are common occurrences in the actual experience of Christians, who gaze after their departing Christian friends, as the disciples gazed after their ascending Lord, and hear them sing, as they ascend: "O death, where is thy sting; O grave, where is thy victory."

Religion holds a prominent place in Greek tragedy, as, in some form or other, it always has done and always will do in real life. The existence and providence of God, his universal government, and his eternal and immutable laws, with their unfailling rewards and inevitable penalties, are constantly recognized. This is the point, perhaps, in which the tragedies approach nearest to the unapproachable light and glory of the scriptures; and too many who bear the name of Christians might refresh their convictions and elevate their conceptions of the supremacy of the di-

vine law and the certainty of retribution, by a familiar acquaintance with the doctrine of the divine *Nemesis*, as it stands out on the pages of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. The frailty, ignorance, and imperfection of men are also confessed. The necessity of a revelation of the divine will, by prophets and oracles, is universally acknowledged. Prayer is offered. An existence after death is implied. And the connection between this life and the next, the dependence of men on a higher power, and the necessity of obedience to a higher law, though sometimes called in question, are more often strenuously asserted.

Some ideas exist not only of a fall, but also of a recovery ; some ideas, not only of a controversy between the gods and wicked men, but of the possibility, in some cases at least, and the blessedness, of reconciliation. Such ideas are universal. They belong to man as man ; and they lie at the foundation, not only of natural, but revealed religion.

But as they appear in the Greek tragedies, these ideas are too much ideas of the reason and the imagination ; too little of the conscience and the heart. This is true, perhaps, generally, of the religion of cultivated nations ; and true of too many nominal Christians. But it is emphatically true of the Greeks. Their religion was ideal, poetical, aesthetic, rather than real, practical, personal. There is more of the religious element in Sophocles than there is in Shakspeare ; but there is far less of the ethical element. The conscience is less developed. The writer seems to know less of its nature and power ; and his characters who are fit subjects for its compunctious visitings, seldom or never writhe under its tortures. And those sublime utterances touching the retributive providence and government of God, which hold very much the same place in the Greek dramatist, as the remorse of conscience does in the English, proceed, not from the criminals who are to experience the retribution, but from the chorus and the better characters, who look on, and expect it, or see it fall on others. The want of an enlightened, sensitive conscience, is the grand defect in the Greek character, as it is seen either in the literature or in the history of the people.

And we see a decided growth of this ideal tendency in passing from Aeschylus to Sophocles; owing partly, perhaps, to the genius of the individual poet, but partly, also, we must think, to the advancing culture of the people. It seems as if, as they advanced in time and progressed in the cultivation of literature and art, they receded from the fountain' of moral and religious truth, and the ideas of the primeval revelation lost their vital power. In Sophocles, more than in Aeschylus, there is room for the feeling, in some passages, at least, that the gods are powers or personifications, rather than persons. Law and providence are more nearly another name for destiny, though *the god in them* is still, at times, brought out with great distinctness. Worship approaches somewhat the modern pantheistic worship, though it is still far from the unreality and absurdity of the latter. Prayer is a sublime or beautiful song. A veil is drawn over the unseen world, and its awful retributions are but dimly projected on the confines of the present scene.

As a natural consequence of the prevalence of the imagination over the conscience, of the aesthetic over the moral, in the character of the Greeks, their ideas of holiness and sin, and hence also of reconciliation and redemption, are sadly defective. Here, however, all religions are defective in comparison with the religion of the Bible. Holiness and sin are new ideas, almost new words in the Bible, so frequent is their occurrence, so profound is their significance, so over-awing their power. Other books talk of infirmities, vices, crimes — the infirmities of this man, the vices of that man, and the crimes of the few. The Bible convicts every man of personal sinfulness in the sight of a personal and holy God. The Hindoos worshipped Might, in Juggernaut and other monstrous forms; the Assyrians, the Powers of Nature, as idealized in their winged lions, and bulls; the Persians, Light; the Egyptians, Life; the Greeks, Beauty — human beauty as the image of divine; the Romans, Law — the law of the State, as the representative of the law of God.¹ The Jew and the Christian alone worship a God of *holiness* —

¹ Cf. Robertson's Sermons, First Series, Sermon XI.

“GLORIOUS IN HOLINESS.” You will get no such idea of God as that, from all the poetry and philosophy of the ages.¹ Yet that is the idea conceived of God by the Hebrew lawgiver, a thousand years before Sophocles and Plato were born. And as the higher idea always involves the lower, so, in this case, holiness is, at once, the greatest might, the purest light, the highest life, the truest nature, the divinest beauty, and the most perfect law; while, over and above all these, it is the only proper standard of personal, moral, spiritual *character* that can stand the test of all earthly temptations, and the more fiery trial of the final judgment.

The chorus, in the Greek tragedy, sing of the all-seeing, all-powerful Zeus, with his oracle-inspiring, Loxian son, and his wise and terrible daughter, the triple powers of heaven; and also of the avenging deities, the dreadful powers of hell; and as they sing, the actors and spectators tremble at their majesty and might. The seraphim of the Old Testament, and the living creatures in the New, veil their faces before Him who was, and is, and is to come, and cry HOLY! HOLY! HOLY! And prophets and kings, the wisest and best men on earth, overwhelmed by a sense of their comparative impurity, cry out “Wo is me! for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell among a people of unclean lips; for I have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!” And saints and angels, in heaven, prostrate themselves before the throne, saying, Thou, alone, art holy.

It is just this lively consciousness of *sin*, educated by all the history, and prophecy and sacrifices and shadows of the Old Testament, and quickened into yet higher sensibility by the Word and Spirit of the New, which gives such a new and strange significance to the ideas and the very words Atonement, Reconciliation, Justification, Sanctification, and the whole plan of salvation, which is revealed in the Gospel of Christ. “The exceeding sinfulness of sin” is the logical and practical antithesis of a God “glorious in holiness.” And when men see and feel their “exceeding sinfulness” in the

¹ It is not denied, that holiness is an *attribute* of the supreme God of the Greeks; but it is not his characteristic and his glory.

presence of a thrice holy God, then they are prepared to appreciate the unspeakable preciousness of the Christian revelation, which brings to such men life, salvation, and comfort through the divine Trinity. Blessed, glorious gospel of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost! How it shines brighter and purer in comparison with the brightest lights that have ever twinkled and faded in the long night of ages!

ARTICLE III.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF SIR WILLIAM HAMILTON, AND ITS RECENT THEOLOGICAL APPLICATIONS.

BY PROF. JOSEPH HAVEN, D. D., CHICAGO, ILLINOIS.

IN October, 1829, appeared, in the *Edinburgh Review*, an Article sharply criticising the *Cours de Philosophie* (then recently published) by Victor Cousin. This Article, by its profound and masterly analysis, its critical sharpness, its combined candor and fearlessness, its remarkable erudition, at once attracted attention as the work of no ordinary mind. It was understood to be from the pen of Sir William Hamilton, baronet, of the ancient family of that name, a lawyer by profession, at that time filling the chair of civil law and universal history in the university of Edinburgh; known to the literary circles of the metropolis as a man of extensive and varied acquisition, but not previously of established repute in the world of letters. A few years previously he had been an unsuccessful competitor with Wilson for the chair of Moral Philosophy in the university.

On the Continent, at the time of which we speak, few names were more illustrious, in the world of letters and philosophy than that of Victor Cousin, then in the height of his fame as professor of philosophy to the faculty of letters at Paris. His personal history, his learning, his reputation as a