

beginning to feel that the polity of the Presbyterian Church is wiser, safer, and better adapted to guard and maintain the cause of truth and Godliness, to lift up an effectual standard against error, and to preserve, in its purity and, simplicity, “the faith once delivered to the saints.”

We assure such, of our affectionate sympathy with them, in the trying position in which they are now placed, in the conflict between their views of truth and duty, and a natural reluctance to sever bonds in which they have been long and pleasantly united with their brethren. We pray that God will give them wisdom to see clearly their duty, and strength to discharge it faithfully. We would encourage them in every effort to bear testimony to the truth, and remind them that

“Truth crushed to earth, will rise again;
The eternal years of God, are her’s;
But Error, wounded, writhes in pain,
And dies, amid her worshippers.”

ARTICLE III.

THE NECESSITY AND IMPORTANCE OF CONTROVERSY.

The capacity, extent, and province of reason, in reference to religious truths,—the design and authority of the Word of God, as the standard of doctrine,—the nature, character and purposes of God,—the trinity of persons in the one eternal Godhead,—the deity, offices and work of the Lord Jesus Christ,—the Divinity and work of the Holy Ghost,—the nature and necessity of the atonement,—these are subjects, which lie at the very foundation of all religion: the pillars and ground of all religious truth. The view we take of these doctrines, makes us deists or believers,—rationalists or Christians,—the only true worshippers of the “true God, and our Saviour,” or blasphemous idolaters. These truths underlie the very “first principles” of all piety, namely, the relation in which man stands to God, and God to

man, the independence or absolute helplessness of the creature, the way of salvation, and the whole manner and matter of acceptable worship. They lead to two systems of belief, separated by a chasm of impassable depth, and "contrary, the one to the other."

And yet both exist, and both claim the name, the authority, and the sanctions of Christianity. Both are found among us. Both have their ministry, their ordinances, and their worshippers, and both hold forth their claims to the allegiance of ourselves and our children.

What course, then, are we to pursue? Both cannot be true. One or the other must be false, and if false, dangerous, delusive, and destructive. What are we to do? Above all things, says the world, do not controvert, do not quarrel. Peace is more important than opinion.

For modes of faith, let graceless zealots fight,
He can't be wrong whose life is in the right

Just similar was the condition in which the primitive believers were placed when the Apostle Jude wrote to them his epistle.

The object of God, in this epistle, was to warn Christians of the existence of false and heretical teachers, from whose cunning guile they were in imminent danger,—to assure them of the Divine judgments to which such teachers, and all who gave heed to their seducing errors, were exposed,—and to urge upon them the duty of strenuously maintaining and defending the truth and purity of the Gospel. The design of the epistle is practical. It proceeded from the love cherished towards those who professed to be the disciples of Christ. Their spiritual welfare deeply affected the Apostle's heart. *Their* salvation, and that salvation which was "the common" ground of hope and joy to all believers, was at stake.—For the Gospel is the power of God to salvation only, when it is understood in its purity, and received in its simplicity, and in Godly sincerity. He felt; therefore, under a pressing necessity to write unto them, because others were using efforts to pervert them. "For," says he, "there are certain men, crept in unawares, who were of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turn-

ing the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.”

The Apostle, therefore, at once, and with earnest importunity, calls upon those endangered believers to realize the imminent peril of their condition. All error is pernicious in its effects. But it is destructive in proportion as it affects those doctrines which relate to the Author and the way of salvation. And when men represent God as *so* gracious that they may continue to indulge the lusts of the eyes, and the pride of life,—and when they deny the essential Deity, and omnipotent, omnipresent power, and vicarious atonement of “the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ,”—then, as the Apostle Peter declares, they introduce “damnable heresies,”—“pernicious ways,”—and bring upon themselves swift destruction.—(2 Pet. 2: 1.) This is what the Apostle Paul also taught, when he calls upon the Roman Christians to “mark them who caused heresies among them, contrary to the doctrine which they had learned.”—(Rom. 16, 17.) The Apostle John goes still further. He makes the acknowledgment of the coming of Christ, as implying an antecedent divinity, and an assumed humanity the criterion of one who “is of God.” “Every one professing to expound the Gospel, (says the Apostle,) who does not teach that Jesus was a man,—not, however, as was affirmed by the Docetæ, in *appearance only*, but in *reality*, and yet, that he was *not merely* a man, united, as the Corinthians alleged, to some super-angelic being,—is not of God, but is that spirit of anti-christ whereof ye have heard that it should come, and even now already is it in the world.—John, 4:3. That teacher only, therefore, is of God, who confesses that He ‘who was in the beginning with God,’ and who ‘was God,’ ‘was made flesh,’ and became the word of God incarnate, ‘God manifest in the flesh.’”*

The Apostle, therefore, under the guidance of inspiration, felt that any departure from “the truth as it is in Jesus,” and, especially as it concerned the person, character, and work of Christ, endangered the salvation of immortal souls.

* See Horsley’s Tracts

They knew, also, that all religious error is traceable, ultimately, to the malign influence of that seducing spirit, who is denominated "the father of lies."—Matt. 13:41.* To him the Apostle Peter expressly, ascribes the fraud and hypocrisy of Ananias.—Acts, 5:3. The Apostle Paul warns the Corinthians that "the serpent who beguiled Eve, through his subtilty, would also corrupt their minds from the simplicity that is in Christ, by transforming himself into an angel of light, and in the character of a minister of Christ," preaching another Jesus whom he had not preached, and another gospel, which had not been originally proclaimed.—2 Cor. 11:3, 4; Eph: 6:11. And Christ himself warns the church of Thyatira against false doctrines, which he denominates "the depths of Satan."—Rev. 2:24.

But how does Satan accomplish these hellish purposes? Not singly, but by instigating "false Christs," "false prophets," and "false teachers," "false apostles," "deceitful workers," to transform themselves into the ministers of righteousness. Such being the case,—such being the sleight and cunning craftiness with which false teachers, under a pretence of liberty, with feigned words make merchandize of souls, the Apostle calls upon believers to be on their guard. Not merely human eloquence and sophistry, and philosophy, he in effect tells them,—not merely apparent zeal for God, and for the dignity and happiness of man, are employed to pervert, and, if possible, to deceive the very elect,—but principalities and powers, and spiritual wickedness in high places, are also leagued for the seduction and overthrow of believers. And it is only by taking to themselves the whole armour of God, and fighting the good fight of faith, that Christians can hope to stand firm and true against the wiles of the devil.

The Apostle knew also that there is in every one of us an evil heart of unbelief leading us to depart from the living God, to hold the truth in unrighteousness, and to build upon the foundation of God's word, the hay, wood and stubble of man's teaching. There is, in the very best of men, a corrupt principle which, unrestrained by the

* Matt. 13:19. Mark, 4:15. Luke, 8:12.

grace of God, will lead to error in judgment, and impiety in practice. And when error is flattering to human pride, compliant to human infirmity, and tolerant to human opinions, practices, and fashions, and when it promises heaven and happiness without holiness, self-denial, regeneration and zeal for good works, it is far *more* congenial than that truth which teaches that “except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God,”—that “without holiness no man shall see the Lord,”—that if any man will come after Christ, he must deny himself, take up his cross and follow him,”—come out from the world and be separated,—and that, “denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, he must live soberly, righteously and Godly, in this present evil world, looking for the coming of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ.”

Believers, therefore, are vehemently and with great earnestness, exhorted to remember these things,—to consider their danger, corruption within, temptation without,—and to cleave with full purpose of heart unto the Lord, and to the word of His testimony. The great trust committed to every Christian is the truth—“THE FAITH,” as it is here called,—the faith which has God for its author, Christ for its object, sanctification for its evidence, and salvation for its end. It is by the hearing of the Gospel, this faith is produced. It is by the truth we are sanctified. And this Gospel, when accompanied by God’s spirit, is “the power of God unto salvation.”—This faith God has delivered to believers in his word by holy men of God, who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. God’s word alone can tell us what God is—what God wills—what God requires of man to believe, and to do, in order to salvation. All other lights are false lights, which lead only to precipices and to perdition. This alone is the true light shining in a dark place, to which we do well that we take heed. The world by wisdom knew not God, and it never entered into the heart of man to conceive the things now revealed, the mystery hid for ages.

And as Christ, the sum and substance of this faith, was “offered once to bear the sins of many,” (Heb. 9: 28,) so this faith has been “once” for all, that is, *fully*,

finally and *authoritatively*, “delivered” in the *Scriptures*. It endureth forever. It is the everlasting Gospel. It has been delivered once, and no more. It is the same yesterday, to-day and forever. No other foundation for our faith and hope can any man lay, than that which is laid. As a *testament*, the Gospel contains the whole will of Christ. As a *rule*, it contains the whole law of Christ. As a *creed*, it contains the whole doctrine of Christ. As a *guide*, it is able to make wise unto salvation. And as *the means*, of salvation, it is perfect, converting the soul.

This, then, was the common salvation,—“the faith,”—about which the Apostle gave all diligence to write, and earnestly and vehemently to exhort. And as this was the faith once and always delivered unto the saints, in divers manners, and in divers measures, from Adam until Christ, so it is the faith, the only faith, and the whole faith, now delivered unto the saints. And as in the Apostles’ days, and from the days of *Cain until then*, this faith was assailed and corrupted and derided, and another gospel, which was not another, was, with cunning and persuasive craftiness, urged upon man’s acceptance, so also is it, in these last days, and so will it be.

What then, we again ask, are we to do?

We appeal to common sense. If the faith is that in which our hope for everlasting life is founded,—if it is by the truth, as it is in Jesus, we are made free,—if it is through God’s truth we are sanctified,—if it is the truth which purifies the heart,—if the truth is the source and motive to godliness,—if the truth is a part of the Christian armour, by which every Christian is to stand,—if this truth is to be believed, to be obeyed, to be manifested, and to dwell in the saints for ever,—if we are bound to love the truth, to speak the truth, to judge according to the truth, to rejoice in the truth, to deal in the truth, to buy the truth and sell it not, to abide in the truth, and to contend earnestly for it,—if the church is to be the pillar and ground of the truth, and has received a banner that she may, be the preserver, the defender, and the propagator, of the truth,—if God is the author of the truth, and the truth is, the truth of God,—if Christ is the

truth, and the truth is the truth as it is in Jesus,—if the Holy Ghost is the inspirer of truth—if He guides only into truth, and along the way of truth,—if He sanctifies and saves only by the truth, and is emphatically the Spirit of Truth,—if the Gospel is truth, and nothing but the Gospel is truth,—if it is as the truth, and only as the truth, the Gospel is the power of God to the salvation of them that believe,—if it is the great end and aim, and commission of the church, and of every individual member of that church, to endeavour to convert those who err from the truth, and to bring them into the way of truth,—and, not to multiply these statements, which are all in the language of Scripture, if the enemies of Christ are represented as they who are devoid of the truth, who sell the truth, who speak not the truth, who love it not, and obey it not, who resist the truth, turn away from it, hold the truth in unrighteousness, change it into a lie, preach another gospel, and confess not that Christ is the sovereign Lord and Jehovah, God manifest in the flesh,—if I say these things are so, then what else can any lover of the truth do, than contend earnestly for it, whenever, wherever, and by whomsoever it is gainsayed.

We appeal to the common experience and conduct of men in regard to every other kind of truth than religious truth, and in reference to every other privilege and blessing, which they hold dear. Let the truth of civil, and religious freedom, as involving the right of free inquiry, freedom of speech, freedom of action, and freedom of religious worship, be assailed,—let the constitutional rights and privileges secured by the charter of our national government to every member of the confederacy, be endangered or denied,—let the rights and privileges of any citizen, or any class of citizens, in any one of our communities be infringed upon, by our municipal authorities,—or in any other way, let personal and social rights be interfered with,—and how sharp, and long, and loud, and earnest, and costly, and if needs be, even unto blood, will be the controversy, the disputes, the appeal to public opinion, to judicial investigation, and to the true interpretation of our constitution. In regard to civil liberty, temporal rights, and all personal and social blessings, no man would hesitate to contend *earnestly*

and *as often*, and *as long*, as necessity might demand. This freedom of debate and controversy is the main-spring and essential conservator and guardian of free constitutions, repaying for its many incidental evils by activity, energy, knowledge and personal interest in the common weal, awakened by it in every bosom. And just as surely, just as necessarily, and just as profitably will the momentous truths and blessings of the Gospel appear of unspeakable value to every believer, agitate their understandings, inflame their spirits, enkindle their devotion, and when assailed, and denied, excite to controversy and earnest contention.

From the very nature of the case, we conclude that this must be so. What man *loves*, he clings to and defends; for where the treasure is, there will the heart be also. What is worth proclaiming, is worth preserving, and what we feel it our duty to believe, we feel it our duty to defend. What we value we will maintain and earnestly contend for, against all who would defraud us of it. Things must become the subjects of contention in proportion to their importance, and religion and religious truth being unspeakably the most important things in the world, no man can be either seriously or sincerely a Christian, who will not contend earnestly for his faith, and hope, against all opposers. The cause of such contention is not in religion, any more than it is in science or liberty, or social rights. The fault, in every case of controversy, is in the different understandings, tempers, interests, passions, and prejudices of mankind, incited by the great enemy of all peace. As long as these lead to opinions and practices contrary to the truth in science, liberty, or religion, there must be, as the Apostles say, divisions, and contendings and defendings. So long as, on whatever plea, the citadel of truth is assailed, the sentinel must give warning, the garrison must appear under arms, and that citadel must be defended; and he that acts otherwise will and must be a traitor to science, to his country, and to his God.

We appeal to the very nature of the Gospel itself. What is the Gospel? It is the revelation of God's plan of mercy and salvation to guilty, sinful and perishing man. In reference, to God, it discloses God's everlasting pur-

pose and plan for blessing us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ,—the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who for our sakes became poor, that we, through his poverty, his blood, his righteousness, might become rich,—the love and condescension of the ever blessed Spirit, who saves us by the washing of regeneration, and by His renewing, sanctifying and comforting influences. Into the name, that is, the belief, worship and service of the Father, Son, and the Holy Ghost, every one is to be disciplined, and in all that pertains to their divinity, offices and services, all are to be indoctrinated. In reference to MAN, the Gospel reveals to us that he is “born in sin,” “an heir of wrath,” “desperately wicked,” “dead in trespasses and sins,” “already condemned,” and incapable, without being born again, of entering the kingdom of God.

In reference to THE WORLD, the Gospel reveals that the whole world lieth in wickedness, being led captive by Satan, who is the god of this world,—that all that is in the world, is not of the Father,—that the whole world is guilty before God, under his wrath and curse, and in the broad way that leadeth to destruction,—that it is commanded to repent and believe the Gospel, in the assurance that he that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned.

The Gospel, therefore, in its doctrines and duties, its mysteries and its threatenings, is a scandal to some, and foolishness to others. It is everywhere spoken against, and in every way opposed, or else modified and moulded into conformity to the views and wishes of man’s darkened understanding and depraved heart. “I came not” therefore says Christ, “to bring peace on earth, but a sword.” In itself, the Gospel is the tidings of peace and good will to man. But as it throws light into the dark *heart*, and dark and evil *ways* of sinful men, men will oppose, resist and condemn it, and thus make that Gospel to be, as it is called, God’s sword, which, in itself, is God’s embassy of love. The alternative, therefore, is the Gospel *with* controversy, or no gospel at all. The Gospel is itself a standing controversy, with the, cavils, the objections, the doubts, and the blasphemies of men. There is not a truth in the Gospel, nor in the Bible, nor

even in natural religion, that is not controverted by the sceptical, unbelieving, proud, and self-conceited wisdom of foolish man. The Atheist denies the very being of God,—the Pantheist' his personality,—the Deist his word,—the sceptic his providence,—the errorist his moral government, his holiness, justice and severity,—and multitudes deny the authority, the claims, the obligations, and the unspeakable worth of the salvation and sanctification to which the Gospel calls. Let us, then, attempt to limit the doctrines to be enforced from the pulpit to *those* truths which are *undisputed*, and we are at once brought, not to the abandonment of the Gospel merely, with all its high mysteries, but to everlasting silence upon every truth, natural or Divine.

So it has ever been, and so it will ever be. Truth, in this world, and among the men of this world, is like Ishmael among his enemies. Its hand is against every man, because every man's hand is against it. It must either conquer opposition or die. It is a testimony for God and his truth, against man and his lies; against the devil and his wiles. From the very beginning of man's apostacy, until now, there has been enmity between the serpent and the woman, between the sons of God and the sons of men, between righteous Abel and a Christ-denying Cain, between the church and the world, between the word of God, and the traditions and philosophy and wisdom of men. The whole of religion is styled repeatedly "Jehovah's controversy."—Hos. 4:1; Micah, 6:2; Jer. 25, 31. The Scriptures are controversial writings. The whole book of Job is a controversy. The prophets were witnesses for God, and his truth, and contenders for the faith. John the Baptist was a firm and vehement and bold contender and martyr for the truth. The ministry of our blessed Lord was a perpetual controversy, and the Gospels a record of it. The Apostles were left to arrive at truth in many things by "much disputing among themselves," (Acts, 15: 7,) and they convinced Jews and Gentiles by much disputing with both.

The early Christians contended against the Jews, Pagans and heresiarchs, of their day, and it was only against the power of the sword, in the face of infamy and death, and with the sacrifice of millions of human lives

from age to age, that the truth prevailed and conquered. When the whole power of the Roman empire and of Vandal fury were leagued to destroy and exterminate that very orthodoxy for which we now contend, it was only by controversy and patient endurance that the priceless truth, as it is in Jesus, was preserved and perpetuated, and heresy overthrown.

When the truth had again been perverted by the man of sin, it was by controversy and faithful contending, even unto blood, that Luther and Calvin, and our fathers in Scotland, and in Ireland, and in France, rescued the truth, and again unfurled its banner to the breeze of Heaven. And it is only by controversy, and contending earnestly, that the truth, in all its purity and power, can ever be maintained and handed down to our posterity, and disseminated throughout the world. The church will remain a living church, and the church of the living God, only so long as she remains the pillar and the ground of the truth,—the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

But if these arguments are insufficient, let us further remind you that controversy and contending is made an imperative duty by God himself. Ministers must *defend* as well as *preach* the truth, and drive away the wolf, as well as protect the sheep. The mouths of deceivers are to be stopped, and gain-sayers must be convinced, who subvert whole houses. If there are damnable heresies, there may be a damnable silence, and a cursed patience, on the part of that watchman who giveth not warning. Woe is unto him, if he do not keep the truth and hold fast the faithful word, and speak the word which becometh sound doctrine. Nor is this woe limited in its effects to their own souls. For it is only when they have declared all the counsel of God that they can feel pure from the blood of other souls crying out for vengeance upon, their unfaithfulness. And it is in view of this fact that many corrupt the word of God, and handle it deceitfully, that all ministers are charged before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing, to reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine, seeing that the time will come when men will not endure sound doctrine, but after their

own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and be turned unto fables. Every minister, therefore, is set for the *defence* of the Gospel, and not merely for its *proclamation*.

Not only ministers, however, but *every Christian* is a *warrior*, under the Captain of his salvation, and under obligation to contend earnestly for the faith, and not to sell it. They must hold it fast, and neither give it away nor suffer it to be taken from them. They must keep it in their *heads*, by being well established in the faith,—in their *hearts*, by being filled with the love of the truth,—and in their *hands*, by being ready to give a reason for it to every one that asketh. They must hold it fast, by persevering devotion to it, and by a zealous defence of it, lest, “being led away by the error of the wicked, they fall from their steadfastness, and at last lose their crown. For he that is content to be a looker-on, while his fellow Christians contend earnestly for the faith, shall never be more than a looker-on when they are crowned with that diadem which is laid up for them who have “kept the faith.”

Objections to religious controversy cannot therefore be religious. They are in evident contrariety to the principles of common sense,—to the invariable conduct of mankind in reference to all other truth,—to the necessity of the case,—to the very nature and genius of the Gospel,—to the way in which the truth has, from the beginning until now, been professed and perpetuated,—to the nature and design of the church, and the ministry,—and to the plain and positive commands of God. From whatever motives such opposition to controversy arises, it involves, therefore, the spirit of disobedience, unfaithfulness, and, that cowardly timidity and, “fear of man which bringeth a snare.” For what is controversy? It is either an oral or written discussion of whatever is controverted as error. Now, to controvert or dispute a point, is only to agitate a question, and sift and weigh its evidence so as to obtain clear and satisfactory ideas of it. And can any man attain to a real personal and assured belief without controversy? It is impossible. Neither can any man *maintain* his belief, or *defend* it, but by continually

controverting, discussing and weighing all that is presented to his mind, for and against his faith.

Aversion to controversy, when it is based upon a professed regard for the interests of religion, is founded upon misapprehension and mistake. It confounds controversy with contention, and contending with contentiousness, and disputation with a disputatious spirit. It does not distinguish between controversy and the temper in which it may be conducted. Religion demands and necessitates *controversy*, but it denounces a *controversial spirit*. The principles which are upheld, the purpose in which it originates, the object for which it is employed, and the spirit in which it is conducted, characterizes any particular controversy as good or evil. If it spring from a mere spirit of contention, from a desire of victory, or a love of display,—from personal animosity, and not from love of the truth, Christianity will not acknowledge it as her own. If employed on questions unnecessary or unimportant,—if it is made the vehicle of personal malignity, and is carried on in a spirit that rends asunder the bonds of charity and peace, it is equally unchristian. But these evils flow not from the *use*, but from the *abuse*, of controversy,—not from the truth, but from the evil heart of its defenders,—and are not therefore inseparable from it, nor a prohibition of its use. And these evils, however great, are not worthy to be compared to the evil and guilt of allowing the truth to be lost through indifference, or endangered through our pusillanimity. And all that the Apostle enjoins, is not that spirit of contentiousness, “but that open, manly, unflinching continuous effort, towards the furtherance of the truth, in all circumstances, and in the face of all opposition, which the truth demands at the hands of those who have honestly received it; and which it will undoubtedly receive, from every man who is deeply and thoroughly convinced that it is the truth, and that all else is but vanity,—yea, worse than vanity,—delusion; delusion and a lie.”

But while many, through *misapprehension* and *mistake*, are opposed to religious controversy, many, it is to be feared, are opposed to it, because they are indifferent to, or opposed to the truth itself. They condemn the

contending earnestly for the faith, because they condemn the faith itself. Some artfully deny controversy, and hold up its abuses and its incidental evils, in order to destroy free inquiry, which would endanger their established errors, and their blinded votaries. Others are so inflated with the idea of their own infallibility, that their insufferable arrogance cannot bear to have oracular declarations, which of course are the voice of God, called in question. Others, again, oppose controversy, but it is only controversy for, and in defence of, the truth; while they are to be freely permitted to controvert *against* the truth. Laziness, pride, intolerance, impiety, indifference to all religious truth, and above all, a secret feeling that the stirring of the waters of controversy may arouse their slumbering but uneasy consciences: these, it is to be feared, constitute the prevailing motives with too many of those who, under the pretence of peace and charity, and the glory of God and the good of souls, cry out against all controversy, unless it be about the paltry questions of some municipal election, or the beggarly elements of mere earthly things.

And when some even good and pious people affirm that controversy is of no use, we would reply, in the language of Dr. Beecher, "It is nearer the truth to say, that no great advance has ever been made in science, religion or politics, without controversy. And certain it is, that no era of powerful theological discussion has ever past away, without an abiding effect in favour of truth. The discussions of Augustine, of Luther, and of Calvin, are felt to this day; and the controversial writings of Edwards, have been to error, what the mounds and dykes of Holland have been to the sea."

Contending earnestly for the faith, is, therefore, an *imperative* and *all-important* Christian duty. "Stand fast in one spirit with one mind, striving together (wrestling together) for the faith of the Gospel, and in nothing terrified by your adversaries." "Why, halt ye between two opinions?" When God's truth is at stake, neutrality must be criminal, and indifference to the truth is, of all others, the enemy most to be dreaded.

Only let our zeal for the truth be combined with charity for the persons of all who oppose it. This discrimina-

tion between *our* accountability for holding and defending the truth, and the accountability of every man only to God, and not to man, for his religious opinions, is the true secret by which we may “speak the truth in love,” and so defend it as to maintain peace and charity, even towards its assailants. This will enable us to honour the truth, without dishonouring ourselves,—to be firm and calm,—and with a warm heart to preserve a cool head, and a graceful tongue.

[The Rev. Thomas Smyth, D.D.]

ARTICLE IV.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE.

Inquiries into the philosophy of vital existence necessarily involve great perplexity and doubt. It is a subject which embraces both the most enlarged and comprehensive views of nature, and the minutest investigations of the most simple and palpable elements and laws of the material world.

How inorganic substances are combined, and transformed into organisms of perfect symmetry and beauty; and what laws govern the wonderful changes of matter, in the production of life, are problems of the greatest interest to the student of nature. Their consideration has confounded the wisest minds of ancient and modern times, and they still remain, and perhaps will ever be, a fruitful source of speculation and controversy. The most beautiful theories have been woven in the closets of sage philosophers, and have had ardent admirers and supporters, until the lights of science have dissipated them into empty air, and left us still groping, in confusion and ignorance, in search of the mysterious agents which are constantly in operation around us.

After all, we can only exclaim with the poet,—

“Full nature swarms with life, one wondrous mass
Of animals or atoms organized,
Waiting the vital breath, when parent Heaven
Shall bid his spirit blow.”