

Communications.

Debate.

NUMBER III.

Go with me now through the wide domain of nature and know that from the particles of which this earth is composed to the countless orbs that grace the heavens, from the tiniest blade of grass to the gigantic tree, from the minutest insect to man, there is written indelibly upon all a dissimilarity that discriminates the one from the other. This dissimilarity tells us that each is to live an existence of its own, never to become absorbed, and this dissimilarity is not only stamped outwardly, but it permeates throughout. But let us confine our thoughts to that which emanates direct from God to matter and mind, and of these tell me as they are eternal, if this diversity does not assure an individuality, and that unending, for if one of these should be annihilated, God's works would be shorn of its completeness. If one personality, one form, who has been brought into being by the Father is to be no more after having gone down into death, how, pray, tell me, how can "Death be swallowed up in victory?" O! death, where is thy sting, O! grave, where is thy victory. Tell me not that one-half, yea, more than half of the human family will never more see life, when the witness, nature, tells me differently. I will ransom them from the power of the grave, I will redeem them from death, O! death, I will be thy plagues, O! grave, I will be thy destruction. What says nature, that life is dependent on death for its development. The life of the vegetable is dependent on the death of the mineral, the life of the animal is dependent on the death of the vegetable, and the life of the spiritual is dependent on the death of the animal for its development. I admit the partial unfolding of the spirit in this life, but spiritual life in its fullness is not encased in an earthly building. "Thou fool that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die." 1 Cor. xix. 30. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." John xii. 24. It is the mission of this earth to develop the body, and that through the death of the fruits of earth. It is the mission of the body to develop the spirit, and that through the death of the body. It is a well established fact that with our earthly existence life and death are continually at war for the supremacy, or in other words, nourishment and waste are daily at work. We are told by men, who know better than we, that in seven years an entire change of body is brought about. We receive this as true, from the fact that if there was no waste, no food would be required after the body is developed, and from the fact that the bodily strength wastes away. How with the spirit? There is no waste only as polluted by sin, no falling by age, but to the last vital breath of body the spirit fails not. It fails not because it is eternal. You would ask how do I know that the spirit is eternal. I know it is eternal. 1st. From the fact that God has given it to man. It is never secondary, but is direct from the Almighty. 2d. I know it from the fact that nature cannot give, through the reception of her fruits by organism, especially to that extent, that the weakest of all animals in infancy progressively arises to the supremacy, in short, I know it because nature tells me so.

Again I know it from the fact 1st, that I read 1 Cor. v. 5, "To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." How long will the day of the Lord Jesus continue? I know it from the fact 2d, that I read in Eccl.

xii. 7, "Then (at the death of the body) shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit to God who gave it." The spirit then, at the death of the body, returns to its Giver, who is from "Everlasting to everlasting." In whom there is neither variableness nor shadow of turning, and is to be saved in the Lord Jesus. And I know it from the fact thirdly, that I read 2 Cor. iv. 18, "While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen, for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." Could language be plainer! All that our natural eyes behold, all they delight to dwell upon, all that our earthly ears hear, however jarring or sweet the sound, all that is felt by the sensations of body, whether pain or comfort, all the delicacies or indelicacies of smell, all our earthly tastes, however delicious or bitter, all is temporal, is passing, is changeable. But the things which are not seen are eternal. Thank God for that word eternal. It tells us of the duration of time, of the continuance of life, it tells us of redemption, of an inheritance, and of an eternal house; but these things we are not permitted to see while in the flesh, for our eyes, they too, are temporal, but faith is unseen, and we "walk by faith and not by sight." But this word eternal, it tells us not of destruction, it tells us not of death, and I will venture there is no word of a like unlimited meaning, conveying the idea of annihilation, that is ever applied to anything which has emanated direct from the Almighty. But to return, "Faith is the evidence (testimony) of things not seen, the substance of things hoped for." Heb. xi. 1. Then the things hoped for are not seen; and "The armor of God that is girded with truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the Gospel of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit, constituting the whole armor, none of which can be seen, therefore are eternal, and what is it that is, to put this armor on to what is it suited to the body. Can this earthly house wear it, can that which is temporal, which is subject to death, which may be handled, felt and seen, buckle on an armor complete in all its parts, which cannot be seen, heard, smelled, felt or tasted, an armor that can never grow old, an eternal armor. Can this body wear it? "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again (the marginal reading is born from above) he cannot see the kingdom of God." Except a man be born from above he cannot walk by faith, he cannot wear the "armor of God."

It does seem to me needless to argue a question that is so plain as to carry its own evidence with it. How can we deny that man possesses a part unlike his "five senses" which shall perish apart, capable of wearing "the armor of God," as enduring as the armor itself. But say you, a stream cannot rise above its fountain. True the body cannot rise above earth, but the spirit which is not of earth, if going in through the "straight gate" and pursuing the "narrow way" will approach nearer and nearer its fountain, God. It has approached near that we have given by the "spirit of God" spirit words, applicable to and to be worn by the spirit of man. You admit a natural birth, and the consequence a natural body. You admit a spirit birth, and you say the consequence is a non-entity, a something which does not exist, and yet that something which is not is to "put on the whole armor of God." You admit a natural body, and a fool adapted to that body; you admit the non-existence of a spirit, body and a fool adapted to that body which is not; you admit a natural life and its corresponding fruits; you admit the nonentity of spirit life and the reality of its fruits, "Love, joy, peace, long-

suffering, gentleness, meekness, goodness, faith, temperance." Gal. v. 22, 23. You admit a natural body applicable to a natural body, and you admit a spirit law applicable to a well to something which exists only in our nostrils. "Vanity of vanity, saith the preacher, all is vanity." Eccl. xii. 8. Admit that the body returns to the dust as it was, and admit that the spirit which never had an existence returns to its Giver, a Giver who gave a something, and yet it was not anything, because that something, man's spirit, never had a being!

Our Troubles.

NUMBER XX.

Having disposed of the union meeting and feeling somewhat dissatisfied, at not receiving any heavenly information there. I resolved to have a social meeting with

CHRISTIANS,

and consult with them, and ascertain if possible, how we could approach the altar of prayer acceptably, when a very serious trouble arose. A brother in whom all in the church and in the world, had the utmost confidence, contended that nothing was providential, and that blessings flow to the human family only through the laws of nature. Hence I have to linger long enough to inquire into this; to my mind, very unholy doctrine. The special providence of God is a more wonderful subject than I intended to introduce. For in dealing with things deep and mysterious, we are liable to become perplexed about the certainty of our own reasoning. I know the doctrine of the providential has been greatly exaggerated and abused, by confounding it with superstition. This has caused a reaction in the minds of many good Christians, and driven them to the conclusion that there is no providential, that God has finished his work and rests from all his labors, and that the law of nature must now accomplish all that can be accomplished, for the amelioration of the condition of man, either in this world or in that to which we are all so rapidly hastening. But if ever I should defy the special providence of God, in attempting to avoid the superstitious notions of men or for any other cause, then may my lips never utter another prayer.

My prayer would be vain; I could not get in faith, when my judgment told me that blessings were only received through the law of nature; and when in deep distress, I got to my Father in heaven, he can give no assistance, but orders me to wait for the movements of nature to roll the favor upon me, I turn away in despair, and return no more to the mercy seat, for with this conviction I would not pray to God, believing that he would answer my prayer. But Christians are taught to pray, both by the precepts and examples of the Savior, by the word spoken to them by the Holy Spirit and our Father, God, in this life, and when we will have been made immortal, our minds will be incapacitated to fathom the great mystery of godliness.

Yet we know He has a moral law. He is the author of both, and the compliance with the one, cannot interfere with the working of the other. Weak must be the faith of the Christian, who has opined that God cannot answer prayer without conflicting with the law of nature. From my standpoint, I give to the moral law of God the preference over the law of nature. The law of nature we learn from science, which may or may not be understood, and is therefore uncertain. While the moral law we learn from the Bible, the truth of which is established beyond the possibility of a successful controversy and therefore must be true. With the certainty of the law of God, as taught in the Bible, every Christian should love him, trust him, and obey him; though we may not be able to comprehend him. We

do know that he is eternally, immutably, and infinitely wise, good, powerful, just, true, holy, loving, kind and forgiving, and to know all this, is enough for me!

In the Bible we have a law requesting the dispensation of Divine providence, which law we can all understand. Paul says, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose." Now if the only true and living God did not by his kind providence, sustain and comfort the good Paul would never thus thought. But we are instructed what we should pray for and how we should ask also that when we ask, we should have confidence in God. "And this is the confidence we have in him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us; and if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him." Rom. v. 14, 15. The savior taught us how to pray as well as what we should pray for, we can on his promise come to the mercy seat in confidence. After the many demonstrations God has given us of his faithfulness, in complying with his promises, to all mercy whether Jew or gentile, and the various manifestations and assurances given under all dispensations, that he was a prayer-hearing and a prayer-answering God.

We may know that when we ask and receive not, it is our fault. If we value our happiness, we should search diligently for the hindering cause, and so soon as found, we should labor to remove it. Every hindering cause being removed, I have implicit faith, that every prayer uttered by the lip of a Christian, will like the smoke of Abel's offering, ascend heavenward and as the dew of Hermon, would blessings descend and Christians would pleasantly dwell together in unity. As David sang, "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity; it is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard that went down to the skirts of his garments; as the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion, for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore." Psalm 133. The church would then be free from the troubles arising from the want of confidence in God, and shine forth as a bright light to the world. Then Christians will be glad upon the first day of the week, when we say unto them let us go up to the house of the Lord.

HENRY THOMAS, Oakland, Cal., March 10, 1878.

The True View.

NUMBER II.

Whenever the baptism of the Holy Ghost is spoken of it is so plain that it is the spirit, and not water to which reference is made that there is no chance for us to misunderstand it.

1. Take Acts x. 44, 45, 46; here it is said that "the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word, and they spake with tongues and magnified the Lord." In this, we have such a description of the case that every one who reads it or hears it read, can understand it without the possibility of a mistake.

2. We will now look at Acts xi. 4. "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak with other tongues as the spirit gave them utterance." This, like the first, is too plain to be misunderstood.

3. Our third will be taken from a different class. Acts xix. 6. "And when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Ghost came upon them, and they spake with tongues and prophesied."

4. Our fourth case is taken from a similar case. Acts viii. 15, 16, 17. We will quote the 15 and 17 verses. "For as yet he was fallen upon none of them only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then laid

they their hands on them and they received the Holy Ghost." This like all the other cases mentioned is very pointed.

5. Our fifth case is still different from any yet examined, having reference only to the spirit of adoption, or of sealing, or the ordinary gift of the spirit, which is given to all who believe on and obey Christ. Acts ii. 38. "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Here again there is no mistaking the Holy Ghost part of this matter, and no chance to mix up the command to repent and be baptized, with the promise of the spirit. Gal. iv. 6. "And because you are sons God has sent forth the spirit of his son, into your hearts crying Abba, Father." Here again is a bestowal of the spirit, but there is no mistaking it for any thing else. Eph. i. 13. "In whom ye also trusted after that ye believed ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise." This also like all other cases mentioned is plain, and I will close this number by affirming more fully that every gift of the Holy Ghost which is spoken of in the New Testament is so plain that it cannot be mistaken for any thing else.

B.

Divine Origin of Christianity Demonstrated.

BY J. P. AMIS.

NUMBER III.

"Could any man invent, at this day, a set of acts" of congress, and make it pass upon the nation "as the only book of statutes we have ever known?"

"As impossible was it for these books, if written in any age after Moses, to have been received for what they declare themselves to be, the municipal law of the Jews; and for any man to have persuaded people that they had owned them as their code of statutes from the time of Moses; that is, before they had ever heard of them! Nay more; they must have instantly forgotten their former laws if they could receive these books as such; and as such only could they receive them, because such they vouched themselves to be."

Was a book of sham laws ever palmed upon any nation since the world began? If not, with what fairness can anyone say this of the Jews? Why affirm that of them which is admitted never to have happened in any other instance?

But the books of Moses have an ampler demonstration of their truth than other law books have; they not only contain the laws themselves, but give an historical account of their institution and regular fulfillment; of the passover for instance, in memory of their supernatural protection, upon the slaying of the first-born of Egypt; the dedication of the first-born of Israel, both of man and beast; the preservation of Aaron's rod, of the pot of manna, and of the brazen serpent, and their annual expiations, their new moons, Sabbaths and ordinary sacrifices. The same books further inform us that the tribe of Levi were appointed and consecrated by God or his ministers, by whom alone these institutions were to be celebrated; that it was death for any others to approach the altar; that at his word all the people were to go out and come in, etc., etc. Therefore, in whatever age after Moses they might have been forged, it was impossible they should have gained any credit, unless indeed the fabricators could have made the whole nation believe, in spite of their invariable experience to the contrary that they had received these books long before from their ancestors. But this would surely have been impossible if none of these things had been practised; and it would have been impossible to circulate as true a set of