SPECIOUS INFLUENCE OF ERROR.

No error is harmless. However trivial it may seem it is a lie, and the antagonist of truth, and must work evil to the extent of its influence. And that influence is to be measured, not by the extent of its divergence from the truth, but by its relations to fundamentals. A slight error in regard to first principles, may vitiate or mar the whole character, just as a defect in the foundation of a building may overturn the whole structure, or a slight deficiency in the stone on which a pillar rests, may crook the beams and crack the walls, and destroy the symmetry of the whole. Thus, let a *stratum* of radicalism underlie the structure of a man's principles, and it will vitiate his reasoning upon all practical subjects. You may be sure to find him on the wrong side of every question; or, if not upon the wrong side, adopting such false theories and exceptionable modes of action, as to make it impossible to work harmoniously with him — Illustrations of this fact are so abundant in the "movements" of the present age, that we need not specify. This is true to such an extent, that, when any new questions come up, we can be almost certain beforehand what ground certain journals and partizans will take.

Again, let a man embrace false principles upon the nature of evidence, and he will be sure to run into grievous errors. If he requires the same kind and degree of evidence for *religious* as for *scientific* truths, he will become skeptical; because, from the very nature of the case, religious truth is not susceptible of mathematical demonstration. And this may account for the fact that an undue attention to the natural sciences, to the neglect of classical studies, tends to skepticism. A mind disciplined to reason exclusively upon mathematical principles, rejects whatever does not admit of mathematical demonstration; while the study of languages cultivates a nice discrimination, and prepares the mind to appreciate moral and religious truth. Both those modes of discipline combined in suitable proportions, will produce a well balanced mind.

But perhaps no more fruitful source of error is to be found than the adoption of a wrong standard of truth. There is but one standard of religious and moral truth; and that is, *the written word of God.* Divine revelation is the only source from which reliable information can be obtained on subjects so much above us, depending on facts which lie beyond the reach of the human mind. But many persons, while professing to receive the written revelation as a standard, subject the truths taught therein to the standard of their own reason, sitting in judgment upon the truth itself, to determine whether it is truth or not. If they judge it to be unreasonable, they reject it, and conclude that it cannot be taught in the word of God. In this manner, they make their own imperfect, short-sighted reason the standard, to which the Bible is made to stand in the relation of a mere auxiliary; whereas the true province of man's reason is not to determine whether a doctrine *ought to be* true, but whether it is true, taking the obvious meaning of the Scriptures as a guide.— When we sit in judgment on the truth itself, instead of the evidence of truth, the Bible is no standard at all. Human reason assumes the reins; and what a race she runs! Let the monstrous extravagance embraced by those who follow her guidance answer. We have seen it somewhere stated that many years ago, two men were discussing this point, and on separating, one of them declared, "I will abide by the Bible," and the other, "I will be guided by my reason." They were then both professedly orthodox. The one who chose reason as his guide has run into the worst vagaries of Swedenborgianism and spiritualism; and perhaps no better illustration of the folly of subjecting truth to the judgment of reason, can be found than his recent attempt to prove that Paul must have been a bad man, because he taught the essential truths of the evangelical system!

The Significance of the Soul.

To every reflecting person, and especially to the Christian, the soul must always be an object of the most intense interest. It is the mind, the breath of God in man, the spiritual, immaterial, and immortal part of our nature, that unseen essence or principle which is the man, being the throne of his intelligence, as also the seat of all his joys and sorrows.— There can be no doubt of its existence; this is revealed by the very first flash of consciousness. The infant is as perfectly aware of its being as the wisest philosopher. On this point, the soul is self-informed, before philosophy has tutored its discrimination, or the machinery of words has come into use. A wonderful visitant to the scene of life, it wakes from the stillness of non-existence with the natal shout of being on its lips, "I *am*"—a discovery it has no power to perfect or lose.

During the period of earthly sojourn, short at the longest, the remarkable powers and properties of the soul become a matter of observation. We see them in ourselves; and we see them in others; we cannot help seeing them. True, it begins in utter feebleness, instinct at first serving as its guide; yet, how soon it commences a progress, which on earth seems to have no end. It sets out upon a marvellous journey; stage after stage of development rapidly succeed each other, till the latent faculties and susceptibilities burst their enclosure, revealing the transcendent dignity of the soul. Reason, conscience, emotions, affections, desires, indeed an august assemblage of the *intellectual*, the *moral*, the *social* and the *sensitive*, attest the superior nature of the source. In its most common state, in the soul of the humblest peasant who plods at his daily toil, we see the imprint of God—the unexpanded endowments of an angel. When enriched with knowledge, and ennobled by virtue, then it becomes an object whose capacities may well fill us with amazement. What are all the sciences, arts, and histories of earth, but the triumphs and trophies of the soul?— Who sees the great agencies in nature, going down into their depths, and rising amid their gorgeous wonders till thought lifts its salutation of praise to the King immortal, eternal and invisible? Whose eye scans the mighty scene, and gives it meaning? Who has stamped the earth with so many marks of intelligence, superadded to those of the Creator?— All this has been done by the mind of man. Whence come those shouts of joy, or those dolorous accents of grief? They spring from the soul. Happiness or misery is nothing but a state of the soul. The truth is, even to the most superficial observation, the soul is immensely the greater part of man. Strike down his intelligence; and man is practically dead. Who would sell his reason for mountains of gold; and consent to be a raving maniac all his days? Not a miser breathes, that would make such a bargain. What is existence to an idiot? A dead blank of mere animal life, because the soul is under a temporary blockade. When we admire men, either the attainments of intelligence, or the virtues of the heart are the objects of admiration; and in either case we pay homage not to the body, but the soul. Let the latter be ill at ease; and what can make us happy? Let it be peaceful; and what can make us miserable? Thus the whole sum of the interest, significance, and importance attached to a human being for this life, must be identified with the endowments and condition of his soul. It is the mind that makes the man. The difference between a scholar and a fool, a villain and a saint, a seraph and a demon, is a difference in mind.—*Evangelist.*

To the Undecided.

"How long halt ye between two opinions?"

What is it that you are undecided about? Not about an evil thing, but about the very best things; not about time, but about eternity; not about the body, but about the soul; not about men, but about God, not about earth but about heaven.

Why are you undecided? Not because there is any doubt about the best and wisest thing, but because you want to keep the worst thing; not because you fear religion will turn out badly, but because you promise yourself you will leave off sin before it ends fatally; not because you think you can be safe if you die undecided, but because you mean to become decided before you die.

Why should you continue undecided?— Not because God will not receive you; not because Christ is not able to save you; not because the Holy Spirit cannot renew and sanctify you; but because you will not come to God—will not trust in Christ,—and will not ask for the Holy Spirit.

What will become of you if you remain undecided? No undecided man can ever go to Heaven; then every man who dies in an undecided state must go to Hell.

How long will you continue undecided?— Perhaps not very long; death may come soon; judgment may come soon; eternity may begin soon; you may be lost soon; you will not be undecided *then*; your character will be decided *then*; and your doom will be decided *then*.

God is not undecided whether he will save you; Christ is not undecided whether he will receive you; the Holy Spirit is not undecided whether he will renew and sanctify you; Satan is not undecieed whether he will try to ruin you.

Candidate for eternity! child of immortality! heir of everlasting joy or everlasting woe! when *all others* are decided about you, *ought you alone to be undecided about yourself?*— [*The Appeal.*

Tales of Erin.

THE KERRY MAN'S WELCOME TO THE FIRST IRISH TESTAMENT.

Oh, where have you so long been hiding,
Dear language of our ancient nation?
In darkness I have been abiding,
But come with tidings of salvation.

"It is now twenty years since I brought the first Irish Testament to Kerry," said S——, "all the way from England; and to be sure the reception which it met with in my dear native country, seemed a fair promise of the blessing that has since attended it by night and by day." "And what took you to England, S——?" "Oh, I was dwelling for some years in that noble country next to our own, the finest in the world; and dear it should be to my heart, for I went there in darkness, and returned in light. It would be too long now to say how the change came about, but it was through meeting a countryman of my own, and reading the Irish Scriptures with him; our hearts stuck close together in the strange land, and closer still as my chains fell off. Yes, I may well bless my visit to England, though I could not stay there, as the thoughts of the ignorance of my poor countrymen would not leave me; and I, knowing the cure, determined to come amongst them, and landed once more in Kerry, with the first Irish Bibles that ever were seen there. One of these, Lady ——— got, and sending for a poor countryman, whom her ladyship knew to be an Irish scholar—"Tom," says the lady opening the Testament, "did you ever see anything like this before?" Tom's eyes seemed to pierce through and through the book, and spread all over it—leaf after leaf he turned, until overjoyed entirely. "If it would not be making too bold," said he, "and taking too great a liberty, I would be after asking your ladyship for the loan of that same blessed book for a few days." "Well," said the lady, "mind that you bring it back at the time you mention, for I have no other Irish Testament but that only." "Oh, never doubt it," replied Tom, "your ladyship shall not be disappointed." And he was as good as his word; for at the end of ten days, "I humbly thank your ladyship," says Tom, "here is the Testament, safe and sound, and my blessing along with it." "And what other book is that in your hand?" said the lady. "Only its counterpart," replied Tom. "I hope your goodness will excuse me, but after having read, I found it was hard to part with it, so I set to work, late and early, and copied it all out." "What! every chapter?" "Och, sorra a word did I leave behind me, and it is I that am rich and happy, too, if you are not displeased." The lady made no answer; indeed she could not, but she kept it in her heart.— The very next time she went to Dublin city, she sent to Tom for his manuscript, and pledged herself to return it with her own hand; and so she did, elegantly bound, after showing it to some of the friends of the Irish Society in the great city; the lady never forgot that of Tom. "Is poor Tom living still, S———?" "Not in this world, but he is gone, we trust, to his rest in glory—and many is the step I have taken after his Irish manuscript, but to no purpose; it would be a precious relic, if I could only make it out; but often, when my heart was low, has it cheered me to think of my poor countryman's welcome to the first Irish Testament."

The Sea Captain.

The stage was crowded with passengers as it passed from New-York to Boston. It was late in the evening when one of the passengers, a sea-captain, endeavored to excite the attention of the drowsy company by giving a relation of his situation. He had been to sea in a fine ship; in a dreadful storm his ship had been wrecked, all his property destroyed, and every soul on board had been lost except the captain, who had saved his life by being on a plank, at the mercy of the waves for several days. The company were interested in this narrative; but they wondered that a man relating such a tale, and telling of an escape almost miraculous, should confirm almost every sentence with an oath. Nothing, however, was said to him. In the morning when the stage stopped, Mr. B., one of the passengers, invited the captain to walk on before with him, and they would step into the stage when it should come up. The proposal was agreed to. Says Mr. B., did I understand you last night, the stage made such a noise, did you say that you had lost your ship? "Yes." Let me ask you one question:—when on that plank did you not vow to your God that if he would spare your life, you would devote that life to his service? "None of your business," said the captain angrily. The stage by this time came up, and they entered it. Towards evening, as the stage was entering Providence, the captain informed the company that he should not sup with them, as he was so unfortunate as not to have any money. Mr. B. takes from his pocket and offers him a handsome bill. "No, says the captain, "I am poor, but I am no beggar." But, replied Mr. B., I do not give it to you as a beggar, but as an unfortunate brother. You must learn that I profess to be a Christian, and I am taught by my religion to do good to all men. The gospel prescribes no limits to benevolence; it teaches us to do good to all. The company applauded, and pressed the captain to take the money. He silently put it into his pocket, without even thanking the donor, though his countenance betrayed uneasiness. The company supped together, and the captain bid each adieu, after having asked Mr. B., when he left town. He was informed, on the morrow, at sunrise. They then parted as it was supposed, for ever. The captain went home with a heavy heart, while Mr. B. retired to rest, satisfied that he had honored his Father who seeth in secret. He was surprised the next day at day-light, to hear some one rap at the door. He opened it, and beheld the captain standing before him in tears. The captain took his hand, pressed it, and said—"Sir, I have not slept a wink since I saw you; I abused you yesterday; I am now come to ask your pardon I *did*, while on that plank, vow to God that I would live differently from what I had ever done; and, by God's help, from this time forward I am determined to do so." The captain could not proceed; they pressed each other's hands, and parted probably to meet no more in this world.

"Trust in the Lord at all Times."

The Rev. Hanserd Knollys suffered much persecution for his conscientious attachment to the truth. In the early part of his ministry, he emigrated from England to America, the common asylum at that time, for all who wished to enjoy liberty of conscience. There he sojourned four years, but returned in 1641, at the earnest request of an aged father. On his arrival in England he was reduced to great straits, but experienced the goodness of Providence in a peculiar manner. The following particulars are extracted from his own account, "I was still poor and sojourned in a lodging till I had but sixpence left, and knew not how to provide for my wife and child. Having prayed to God and encouraged my wife to trust in him, and to remember former experiences, and especially that word of promise, 'I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.'— I paid for my lodging and went out, not knowing whether God's hand would lead me to receive something towards my present subsistence. About seven or eight doors from my lodgings, a woman met me in the street, and told me she came to seek me, and her husband had sent her to tell me that there was a lodging provided and prepared in his house by some christian friends for me and my wife. I told her my present condition and went along with her to her house. There she gave me twenty shillings which Dr. Bastock, a late sufferer, had given her for me, and some linens for my wife, which I received, and told her husband that I would fetch my wife and child and lodge there. I returned with graat joy, and my wife was much affected with this seasonable and suitable supply. After we had returned praises to God, we went to our new lodgings, where we found all things necessary provided for us, and all charges paid for fifteen weeks." When the time was expired he undertook a school, and by the blessing of God was successful in bringing up a large family creditably, and tho' several times imprisoned for religion, continued the laborious and esteemed Pastor of a poor church for fifty years, till he went to his reward, Sept. 19th, 1691, aged ninety-two years. How forcibly such a good providence brings to our minds the promise of God, "Bread shall be given him, his water shall be sure." Isa. xxxiv. 16. What more can we need or desire? O, who would not trust in the Lord, and be a Christian indeed!—*Zion's Banner*