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REVDS. I. B. BILL & E. THOMSON,

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth Peace, good will toward Men."

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The following "fragment" will be read with interest by many. It has something about it, which lingers in our memory after it is read. It gives new interest to the moon, the sky, the earth and meditation.

History of the Ode.

It was a summer's eve! the full moon shone, In brilliancy, amid the vast, blue sky. There were no winds abroad, that stilly eve, Nor one stray cloud in all the firmament. It was a time for holy meditation. Upon a cliff, by the Atlantic sea, One sat alone, and thus, unto himself, He sang:—Perchance, it was an ode to love, Which had its being, in his own young heart; Where, deep enshrined, lay Anna's memory.

The Ode.

THE MOON CAN'T ALWAYS STAY.

I.

Oh haste and come away, Anna!
Here, beside the sea;
The moon appears to stay, Anna,
Just for thee and me.

II.

She seems much like an isle, Anna,
Floating through the sky;
Where spirits light awhile, Anna,
Seeking homes on high.

III.

The winds are slumbering fast, Anna,
Sleeping on the hills;
The hours are sweeping past, Anna,
Fleet as flooded rills.

IV.

The sea is very bright, Anna,
As "the crystal stream,"
And earth looks to my sight, Anna,
Like heaven, in a dream.

V.

I feel a presence near, Anna,
Aye whispering to me;
Perchance, thine angel's here, Anna,
On some ministry.

VI.

Oh haste and come away, Anna,
Here, beside the sea;
The moon can't always stay, Anna,
Just for thee and me.

THE END.

'Tis pity, that no record lives to tell
Aught of the youthful bard, or her who woke
His soul to this fond, touching minstrelsy.

PROGRESSION.

BY R. T.

Progression is a word of frequent occurrence, alike in conversation and in studied composition; but its meaning is rarely defined. It may refer to what is evil, as well as to what is good. Man, as a moral agent, is ever moving onward, to the perfection of happiness or to the realization of misery. CHRISTIANITY remains the same: it is either a saviour of life ending in life, or of death terminating in death. "To the pure, all things are pure;" but to the defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure. It is still true, "that evil men and seducers wax worse and worse." There is no middle path in which any one can travel, and assume a position aloof both from the righteous and the wicked. *Neutrality* has no place in God's Word. "He that is not with me," said the Saviour, "is against me; and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad." Progression is inevitable. To be in the right path, then, how important! And in what fearful consequences will the pursuit of a wrong track terminate!

If the diffusion of knowledge corresponded with the diffusion of ink and paper, and if a subject were understood in proportion as it is mooted, there would be no call for a further

discussion of the subject that we have placed at the head of this article. The world is moving onward to its destiny. Man is running to and fro, and knowledge is increasing in the earth. And as this is an age that boasts of its reason, a truth so manifest must be accounted for. Accordingly, every school furnishes an interpretation accommodated to its own peculiar philosophy, and *progression* has become a most prolific theme. But unfortunately, most of the interpretations that have been furnished, have been sceptical interpretations.

This is an age of *scepticism*. The age of infidelity has passed away. Atheism and deism, like feudalism and knight-errantry, have passed, or at least are fast passing to the shade of forgetfulness. An avowed, downright, well-informed atheist or deist is rarely to be found. These plain, honest, old-fashioned forms of infidelity, have been supplanted by—if not a more rational—at least a more fashionable and less offensive philosophy. Modernized materialism, idealism, transcendentalism, &c. now occupy the throne and reign in the room and stead of the deposed infidelity of by-gone days; and it is both amusing and instructive, to see how singular and contradictory are their doctrines in reference to the why and wherefore of the improved and improving condition of the world.

The materialist looks upon matter as the only divinity. Nature to him is a vast, solid, mathematical, and yet immeasurable fact. On her fair face he reads nothing but blind, irresponsible, and infinite necessity. To him the universe is an uncreated, self-existing, and self-controlling machine—a machine for ever rolling and for ever burning in illimitable space, without a beginning and without an end; a machine not only self-existing and self-controlling, but self-improving; so that *progression*, like spirit and thought, is only a necessary result of the action of all-powerful, ever-present, and incomprehensible matter. According to these philosophers, nature is indeed an altar high as the heavens, and brilliantly illuminated; but its offerings, its incense, and its anthems ascend to no Creator. They look forward to a coming millennium; but it is not the millennium of CHRISTIANITY, but the millennium of *necessity*. The ever-moving and ever-improving machinery of nature, they tell us, will work out, by and by, an immensity of good. But if there is no God and no hereafter, we would ask, *What good is there in all that is done under the sun?*

To the idealist, on the contrary, all things are a spirit without a body. The vast unbounded universe itself is only a mode of thought. Nature is a shadowy abstraction—the infinite projection of the Eternal Mind. To the idealist, the universe, with all its altars, its incense, and its anthems, are not offerings to the Creator, but are themselves only different manifestations or embodiments of the Divinity—all things are God, without an altar or an offering. With these philosophers, *progression* is spirituality becoming more and more spiritual. It is the conquest of spirit over the shadow of spirit. It is the symbol of the infinite losing its infinity. The bright toys of our nursery, they tell us, are being put away. The *ambassador* is giving place to the *king*. Nature is retiring before the advancing footsteps of her God.

Closely allied to idealism, is transcendentalism. But who can tell what transcendentalism is? A philosophy that is confessedly beyond human understanding, is not easily defined. Kant, the father of transcendentalism, seems to have been one of those day-dreamers who love to revel in the ocean of imagination far beyond the deepest sea-line of philosophy; but his almost creative genius transformed this fairy world of seeming reality. Such men as "Richter," and "Novalis," and Goethe, have advocated, and explained,

and embellished Kantism, until it has become the most seductive of all philosophies. As reading books of chivalry and knight-errantry produced Don Quixotism, or as the glare and splendor of the candle produces the giddiness and insatiation of the moth, so does this splendid, but dreamy philosophy, in connection with the transcendent genius of its advocates, affect the reader. He who would examine such a doctrine in the presence of such men, would do well to beware lest the *ignis fatuus* glare should allure him into a land of dreams from which there is no returning. But what are the doctrines of transcendentalism in reference to *progression*?

Religion, says the Kantist, has a foundation deeper than books. Its origin and birth-place are in the soul of man. It is written in man's heart of hearts in mysterious, ineffaceable characters, and books can only be the light whereby it is read. God, religion, eternity—these are all incomprehensibilities, and consequently are matters, not of understanding, but of faith. *Religion addresses itself not to the sense, but to the reason; and the foundation of all reason is faith in God, eternity, and consequent religious obligation.* Man, moreover, is himself a mysterious microcosm—nay rather, a miniature of the Almighty and of the Almighty's universe. The idea of a conic section is conceivable in the head of the school-boy, and in that same mysterious circle the planets have been placed and continue to revolve. There is room, too, for the whole universe in the imagination of man; and is not man, then, a denizen of the universe, and one of the most wonderful of all its wonders? If man, says the transcendentalist, would know that there is a God, let him look deeply into his own soul, for God is there. In any point of time or space produce a living man, and you have the confluence of two eternities. There is an infinity around him and within—above him and beneath; eternity encompasses him on this hand and on that. Tones of sphere-music flit around him; and spirit voices, and tidings from loftier worlds, and holy influences, amid the din and bustle of the busiest life. Happy is the man, happy the nation, with eyes to see these heavenly messengers, and with ears to hear their tidings. That all nations are struggling toward this happiness, is the hope and glory of our times. To ourselves, as to others, success at a nearer or more distant day cannot be uncertain.

Having taken this miniature glance into the *Shekinah* of transcendentalism, and seen something of its doctrines and its expectations, we hope to be the better prepared to appreciate its bearings in reference to the Bible, and its religion. The Kantist looks upon the Bible as a revelation from God; but then the material universe and man's own nature are alike revelations. Jesus Christ, he admits, is a divine personage; but in the same sense he claims that all poets and philosophers are divine. Instead of regarding Christ as the light of the world, he only looks upon him as a more transparent medium or a brighter manifestation of a divine light that lies buried in every human spirit. And basing all his reasonings upon this philosophy, he tells us that he recognizes the truth of Christianity on far higher grounds than miracles and books. Truth, he says, is infinite, unchangeable, eternal; and Christianity being true, it cannot pass away. It must live for ever; for not only in the Scriptures, but also in the heart of man, it is written, "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Christianity is a height to which the human species were fated, and enabled to attain; and having once attained it, they can never retrograde.

So then, according to transcendentalism, Christianity is the effect of human progression, and not the cause of it. The German philosophers would have us believe that the

car of improvement and civilization is being dragged onward by the iron chain of necessity; that we are to look for the cause of all this in man's own organization, and not in any external power. They would fain persuade us that the power and virtue of Christianity lies not in surface truths which he who runs may read; not in its facts, commands, and promises; but in the sacred, silent, unfathomable depths of an interior meaning—a meaning too deep to be penetrated by any vision that has not been annotated by the eye-salve of transcendentalism.

But after all its boasting, this new philosophy is only another effort of the "FATHER OF LIES" to neutralize the power of truth by associating it with a delusion. Its advocates have, many of them, displayed a more than Titan strength; but although in their madness they have lifted mountains, and piled Peléon upon Ossa, yet they are still far from scaling heaven. The philosophy that admits the truth of the Bible, and yet subverts its most obvious teaching, and denies the purpose for which it was given, is but a mad philosophy. Truth, as these teachers tell us, is immutable, eternal, infinite; and if the Bible is true, this philosophy is false. From this conclusion there is no escape. If the Bible is true, man is not a god, but a poor, undone, and dying rebel against the authority of heaven. If the Bible is true, man by his wisdom cannot know God. There is no light within by which he can be illuminated. All within him is darkness; and light, if light he receive, must come from above. *Christ is that divine light—"the (only) true light that enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world." He is "the way, the truth, and life"—the only means of light and civilization, and happiness on earth, and the only way to heaven.*

But these Bible truths are too old-fashioned for German philosophers. Moreover, they involve too deep a responsibility. If the Bible is literally true, and to be regarded as meaning what it says, and as saying very distinctly what it means, its paths are too humble and its requirements too onerous for the wise men of the world. They are far too sentimental to go into the Lord's vineyard and labor; it is much more pleasant to go into their own closets and dream. Preaching Christ and him crucified is too humble an occupation for a modern transcendentalist.

Facts, however, are immutable. Christ is the light of the world, and the only light. So true is this, that Christianity and civilization are synonymous words. Whatever light or lights may lie buried in the soul of man, no spark has been emitted nor ray broken forth; but every nation and every individual has remained buried in moral darkness until illuminated by the sunlight of Christianity. *No nation has ever been civilized independently of the influences of revelation; and at this hour in every country where the Bible is not read, man is a savage, and woman is not only a savage, but a slave. In every country where the Lord's-day is not observed and the gospel preached, governments are not established and law is not respected. The land unilluminated by the gospel of Christ, is still buried in heathen ignorance and moral midnight. These are eloquent facts, and rightly considered, they are very instructive.*

St. John, N. B., Aug. 10th, 1853.

APPLICATIONS.—A Christian, for the sweet fruit he bears to God and men, is compared to the noblest of all plants, the vine. Now as the most generous vine, if it be not pruned, runs out into many superfluous stems, and grows at last weak and fruitless; so doth the best man, if he be not cut short of his desires, and pruned with afflictions. If it be painful to bleed, it is worse to wither. Let me be pruned, that I may grow; rather than cut up to burn.—*Bp. Hall.*