

who control the education of dissenting academies, are fully aware of the danger apparently threatening the creed of the Reformation? Have they their eyes fully open to the progress of unsound opinions, in the United States of North America? If Germany has not yet exerted her dangerous influence over the minds of those who are educating for the ministry, is there no ground to fear that Professor Stuart's subtle commentaries have opened the way for a further advance towards Pelagian views, and that a wifer who has been introduced amongst us, on high authority, as a sound teacher of the faith, has gained many converts in this country to opinions which in his own are already strongly contested? The temptation of mischievous learning is so much to be apprehended, that we must hope, if the tempter should ever come with his deadly intellectual bribe, the guardians of youth will be on the watch, and repulse the enemy, though he assures them that "they shall not die, but shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."

Perhaps it would be premature to say that the effects of continental learning are already discernible in some dissenting pulpits; but *something* is working there even now, which is not for good. We hear now not unfrequently, much, far too much, about "primary" and "secondary" meanings of passages in Scripture. The congregation is sometimes perplexed with a ten-minutes explanation of "the historical sense;" and portions of the word of God which hitherto have without question been applied to Christ, are now explained as having "a primary" view of some Jewish king, priest, or prophet. A preacher will, perhaps, take the 16th Psalm, and at some length explain every word of it as said by David of himself, and show how it agrees exactly with some parts of David's history; then remembering how the inspired writers have taken a different view of the Psalm, will conclude with the christian and spiritual interpretation; not much, in my opinion, to the edification of his hearers. It is like plunging the body first in snow, and then bringing it into the rays of the sun; a very capricious and hazardous treatment of the human frame.

I might quote an instance, where one, whose ministry I usually find profitable and instructive, lapsed once in my hear-

ing into this learned mood, and at some length opened out "the primary meaning" of a well known prophetic passage, leaving a painful impression on my mind, which haunted me for many days; and if this effect is produced on one who is no stranger to expository subtleties, what must not the effect be on those who have hitherto read their Bibles in the old way, and have never suspected that the guide-post to Zion was a Janus with a double face?

The creed of some believers is as a tender root growing out of dry ground, and cannot bear these visitations of blight on its timorous strength. It has need of a kinder and more refreshing treatment.

If I wished to enlarge the prayer, "Lord, increase our faith," it certainly would not be by petitioning for an increase of this sort of preaching which I have here noticed.

FIRE-SIDE RELIGION.

Religion is lovely every where. No station is so high, no society so refined, no character so virtuous, but that religion can add new graces, and afford sweeter enjoyment. She is Heaven's own messenger to man, as man. She is at home in the stately hall of the grave senator, sits with grace and ease by the judge in the court of stern justice, is the choice companion of the man of business, and the welcome guest at Zion's sacred feasts; but no where does she shine with so transcendent beauty, as in the domestic and social circle. Here are seen her most marked influences, for amid the quiet scenes of the fire-side she dwells in peace. Religion itself is highly social. She has to do with the heart and affections; hence all the relations which enter into the domestic state must be more or less affected, more or less refined and hallowed. Here is the home of love, and religion is love; here is to be exercised alone the law of kindness, and religion breathes good will to all. Here are to be generated those schemes of action whose outlines are to be filled up in after life, and religion is the very spirit of enterprize. Something unutterably gloomy hangs over that hearth-stone from which religion has been exiled. Her seat is empty, and no one can fill it. The sacred influence she once