

Evidently the work of a superior and well balanced Mind, at once observant and meditative. It is no every day or every year Publication. The prominent defect is, me-  
salltem judice, in the Style: ~~ie~~ that the Metaphors constitute the web of the Cloth. The writer who habitually reasons in metaphors will now and then reason by them. Besides the frequency in the Latin as well as the English use of frequent of the Figures frustrates their purpose. To imitate the faults I am condemning / no unusual thing, by the bye)

one cannot see ones way thro' the wood  
for the swarm of Fire flies in the path

A young writer of full and stirring intellect  
likes to have his compositions all alive

But let him beware of the morbid  
pedicularis of Rhetoric - tho' the

Pediculi were as beautiful, each seen  
for itself on the object plate of the  
microscope, as the gem beetle, still it is  
a disease - tho' now and then from excess of  
Health at least of the Vis vitæ, S. J. C.



often more than a tinge, of extravagance belongs to every word and action. And yet the exception is only apparent; for though these giants of human nature greatly surpass other men in force of mind, and courage, and activity, still the heroic extravagance, and the irregular and ungovernable power, which enables them to dare and to do so much, is, in fact, nothing more than a partial accumulation of strength, necessary because the utmost energies of human nature are so small, that, if equably distributed through the system, they would be inadequate to arduous labours. The very same task, which the human hero achieves in the fury and fever of a half-mad enthusiasm, would be performed by a seraph in the perfect serenity of reason. Although therefore these vigorous minds are strong when placed in comparison with others, their enthusiasm is in itself a weakness;—a weakness of the *species*, if not of the individual.

Unless a perpetual miracle were to intercept the natural operation of common causes, religion, not less than philosophy or poetry, will draw enthusiasts within its precincts. Nor, if we recollect on the one hand the fitness of the vast objects revealed in the Scriptures to affect the imagination, and on the other the wide diffusion of religious ideas, can it seem strange if it be found, in fact, that religious enthusiasts outnumber any other class. It is also quite natural that enthusiastic and genuine religious emotions

*This is really  
shown by  
and not  
merely in,  
metaphors.  
S.T.C.*



peril of awaking from his illusions when truth comes too late. The religious idealist, perhaps, sincerely believes himself to be eminently devout; and those who witness his abstraction, his elevation, his enjoyments, may reverence his piety; meanwhile this fictitious happiness creeps as a lethargy through the moral system, and is rendering him continually less and less susceptible of those emotions in which true religion consists. *Emotions! O no! no! true religion never consists*

Nor is this always the limit of the evil; for though religious enthusiasm may sometimes seem a harmless delusion, compatible with amiable feelings and virtuous conduct, it more often allies itself with the malign passions, and then produces the virulent mischiefs of fanaticism. Opportunity may be wanting, and habit may be wanting, but intrinsic qualification for the perpetration of the worst crimes is not wanting to the man whose bosom heaves with enthusiasm, inflamed by malignancy. If checks are removed, if incitements are presented, if the momentum of action and custom is acquired, he will soon learn to extirpate every emotion of kindness or of pity, as if it were a treason against heaven; and will make it his ambition to rival the achievements, not of heroes, but of fiends. The amenities that have been diffused through society in modern times forbid the overt acts and excesses of fanatical feeling; but the venom still lurks in the vicinity of enthusiasm, and may be quickened in a

*in emotions  
of any sort  
S. J. C.*

\* The excellent *Written* doubtless, meant to say  
"with which true Religion is accompanied"







and a layman is not a recognised functionary in the Church; he may, therefore, choose his style without violating any rules or proprieties of office.

The concluding sentence approach nearer to the shallow than is quite allowable in so intelligent a writer. "Whatever —

— simplified terms of colloquial expression, Be it so! (tho' even of this I have my doubts. But why? Simply, because the terms and phrases of the Theological Schools have by their constant iteration from the Pulpit become colloquial. The science of one Age becomes the common sense of a succeeding. I can conceive no more direct means of depriving Christian Faith of one of its precatory attributes than of restricting and enlarging the mind, while it purifies and in the very act of purifying the will and affection, than the maxim prescribed in the preceding page. See Aids to Reflection, p. 7 — 11. and the Note, p. 252.



the Divine nature to meet the human, but a humbling of the human nature to a lower range than it might easily reach. The region of abstract conceptions—of lofty reasonings—of magnificent images, has an atmosphere too subtle to support the health of true piety; and in order that the warmth and vigour of life may be maintained in the heart, the common level of the natural affections is chosen as the scene of intercourse between Heaven and earth. In accordance with this plan of devotion, not only does the Supreme conceal Himself from our senses, but He reveals in His word barely a glimpse of His essential glories. By some naked affirmations we are indeed secured against false and grovelling notions of the Divine nature; but these hints are incidental, and so scanty, that every excursive mind goes far beyond them in its conceptions of the infinite attributes.

Nor is it only the brightness of the Eternal throne that is shrouded from the view of those who are invited to draw near to Him that "sitteth thereon;" for the immeasurable distance that separates man from his Maker is carefully veiled by the concealment of the intervening orders of rational beings. Though the fact of such superior existences is clearly affirmed, nothing more than the bare fact is imparted; and we cannot misunderstand the reason and necessity of so much reserve; for without it those free and kindly movements of the heart in which genuine devotion consists, would be overborne

\* That the Personity of God, that the "I AM," is presented more prominently in the S. Scriptures than the (so called) physical Attributes, is most true and constitutes one of the distinctive characters of their superior worth and value. It was by dwelling



too exclusively in the infinites, that all the ancient Philosophers, Plato excepted, fell into Pantheism and so in later times Spinoza. Nevertheless it would be

by impressions of a kind that belong to the imagination. Distance is understood only by the perception of intermediate objects. The traveller who, with weary steps, has passed from one extremity to the other of a continent, and whose memory is fraught with the recollection of the various scenes of the journey, is qualified to attach a distinct idea to the higher terms of measurement; but the notion of extended space, formed by those who have never passed the boundary of their native province, is vague and unreal. Such are the notions which, with all the aids of astronomy and arithmetic, we form of the distances even of the nearest of the heavenly bodies. But if the traveller, who has actually looked upon the ten thousand successive landscapes that lie between the farthest west and the remotest east, could, with a sustained effort of memory and imagination, hold all those scenes in recollection, and repeat the voluminous idea with distinct reiteration until the millions of millions were numbered that separate sun from sun; and if the notion thus laboriously obtained, could be vividly supported and transferred to the pathless spaces of the universe, then, that prospect of distant systems which night opens before us, instead of exciting mild and pleasurable emotions of admiration, would rather oppress the imagination under a painful sense of the measured interval. If the eye, when it fixes its gaze upon the vault of heaven, could

propose to place a series of Scripture passages in synopsis before the Author of this Essay which would render it a difficult task for him to make out his assertion. Eternal, omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent the one only absolute Good. The



*Holy, the Living - The Creator as well as Maker  
of the Universe - Can the Author's mind go far  
beyond these? Yet these are all clearly affirmed in  
Scripture.*

see, in fancy, a causeway arched across the void, and bordered in long series with the hills and plains of an earthly journey — repeated ten thousand and ten thousand times, until ages were spent in the pilgrimage, then would he, who possessed such a power of vision, hide himself in caverns rather than venture to look up to the terrible magnitude of the starry skies, thus set out in parts before him.

And yet the utmost distances of the material universe are finite; but the disparity of nature which separates man from his Maker is infinite; nor can the interval be filled up or brought under any process of measurement. Nevertheless, in the view of our feeble conceptions, an apparent measurement or filling up of the infinite void would take place, and so the idea of immense separation would be painfully enhanced, if distinct vision were obtained of the towering hierarchy of intelligences at the basement of which the human system is founded. Were it indeed permitted to man to gaze upward from step to step, and from range to range, of the vast edifice of rational existences, and could his eye attain its summit, and then perceive, at an infinite height beyond that highest platform of created beings, the lowest steps of the Eternal throne—what liberty of heart would afterwards be left to him in drawing near to the Father of spirits? How, after such a revelation of the upper world, could the affectionate cheerfulness of earthly worship again take place?—Or, how,

*\* Has the Author then lost this liberty of  
Heard! There are eloquent paragraphs, but  
chagrin. Single line, weighs with me more than all  
this assumed of imaginary Hierarchies! There neither  
are nor can be but three essential differences,*



*the Absolute the Finite rational and the Finite  
in rational alone God - Man - Beast - Besides, the Anti-  
Scheme is unscriptural, if not anti-scriptural. Pile  
up Hierarchs on Hierarchs, and idolatry the*

*Cabala -  
what a*

while contemplating the measured vastness of the interval between heaven and earth, could the dwellers thereon come familiarly, as before, to the Hearer of prayer, bringing with them the small requests of their petty interests of the present life? If introduction were had to the society of those beings whose wisdom has accumulated during ages which Time forgets to number, and who have lived to see, once and again, the mystery of the providence of God complete its cycle, would not the impression of *created superiority* oppress the spirit, and obstruct its access to the Being whose excellencies are absolute and infinite? Or what would be the feelings of the infirm child of earth, if, when about to present his supplications, he found himself standing in the theatre of heaven, and saw, ranged in a circle wider than the skies, the congregation of immortals? These spectacles of greatness, if laid open to perception, would present such an interminable perspective of glory, and so set out the immeasurable distance between ourselves and the Supreme Being with a long gradation of splendours, that we should henceforward feel as if thrust down to an extreme remoteness from the divine notice; and it would be hard or impossible to retain, with any comfortable conviction, the belief in the nearness of Him who is revealed as "a very present help in every time of trouble." But that our feeble spirits may not thus be overborne, or our faith and confidence baffled and perplexed, the Most

*gandy vapor is the whole conception to a  
Sane mind compared with the idea presented  
in the Gospel Promise to be one with God in  
and thro Christ the Son of God -*



*There are, in prayer & devotion, two errors here  
and both dangerous. First, that the rational and  
only true ideas of the Supreme Being are incompati-*  
ENTHUSIASM IN DEVOTION. 31 *-ible with*

style distasteful. As the Hearer of prayer stoops to listen, so also must the suppliant stoop from the heights of philosophical or meditative abstractions, and either come in genuine simplicity of petition, as a son to a father, or be utterly excluded from the friendship of his Maker.

This scriptural system of devotion stands opposed then to all those false sublimities of an enthusiastic pietism which affect to lift man into a middle region between heaven and earth, ere he may think himself admitted to hold communion with God. While the inflated devotee is soaring into he knows not what vagueness of upper space, He whom "the heaven of heavens cannot contain," has come down, and with benign condescension, has placed himself in the centre of the little circle of human ideas and affections. The man of imaginative, or of hyper-rational piety, is gone in contemplation where God is not; or where man shall never meet him: for "the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy, and who dwelleth in the high and holy place," when he invites us to his friendship, holds the splendour of his natural perfections in abeyance, and proclaims that "He dwells with the man who is of a humble and contrite spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." Thus does the piety taught in the Scriptures make provision against the vain exaggerations of enthusiasm; and thus does it give free play to the affections of the

*the spirit of prayer, and petitionary pleading  
taught and exemplified in the Scriptures. Secondly,  
that "this supplication with arguments" and im-  
-portunate requests being irrational and*



known by the Devotee to be such, & it is never  
his duty to pray in this fashion—i.e. that  
the Supreme Being requires of his rational

heart; while whatever might stimulate the imagination is enveloped in the thickest covering of obscurity.

The outward forms and observances of worship are manifestly intended to discourage and exclude the false refinements of an imaginative piety, and to give to the religious affections a mundane, rather than a transcendental character. The congregated worshippers come into "the house of God"—the hall or court of audience, on the terms of *human association*, and by explicit invitation from Him who declares that, "where-soever two or three are gathered together in his name, there He is" to meet them. And being so assembled, as in the actual presence of the "King of saints," they give utterance to the emotions of love, veneration, hope, joy, penitence, in all those modes of outward expression, which are at once proper to the constitution of human nature, and proper to be addressed to a being of kindred character and sympathies. Worship is planned altogether in adaptation to the limitations of the inferior party, not in proportion to the infinitude of the superior:—even the worship of heaven must be framed on the same principle; for how high soever we ascend in the scale of created intelligence, still the finite can never surmount its boundaries, or at all adapt itself to the infinite. But the infinite may always bow to the finite. Those, therefore, who, blown up with the vapours of enthusiasm, contemn and neglect the modes

*Creatures that they should, as the condition of  
offering acceptable worship to him, wilfully  
blind themselves to the Light which he  
himself had given them, and dragging*



*their sense of the truth into a temporary haze.  
make believe that they knew no better. As if the*

and style of worship proper to humanity, must find that, though indulgence is given to their affectation on earth, there can be no room allowed it in heaven.

The dispensations of the divine providence towards the pious, have the same tendency to confine the devout affections within the circle of terrestrial ideas, and to make religion always an occupant of the homestead of common feelings. "Many are the afflictions of the righteous," and wherefore, but to bring his religious belief and emotions in close contact with the humiliations of animal life, and to necessitate the use of prayer as a real and efficient means of obtaining needful assistance in distress? If vague speculations or delicious illusions have carried the Christian away from the realities of earth, urgent wants or piercing sorrows presently arouse him from his dreams, and oblige him to come back to the importunacy of prayer, and to the simplicity of praise. A strange incongruity may seem to present itself, when the sons of God—the heirs of immortality—the destined princes of heaven, are seen implicated in sordid cares, and vexed and oppressed by the perplexities of a moment; but this incongruity is only perceived when the great facts of religion are viewed in the false light of the imagination; for the process of preparation, far from being incompatible with these apparent degradations, requires them; and it is by such means of humiliation that the hope of immortality

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*Holy one, the God of Truth and Father of  
Light resembled an Oriental or African Despot  
whose Comptrols, even those whom he has himself enriched  
and ennobled, must approach him in beggar's rags,  
and with a beggarly whine—I find the Scripture*



*Model of Devotions, the Prayers and Thanksgiving of  
the Psalmist and of our Church Liturgy, conformable  
to the clearest convictions of my Reason and I do not  
hesitate to attribute the contrary persuasion to the*

is bound down in the heart, and prevented from floating in the region of material images.

We have said, that when an important object is zealously pursued in the use of means proper for its attainment, a mere intensity or fervour of feeling does not constitute enthusiasm. If, therefore, prayer has a lawful object, whether temporal or spiritual, and is used in humble confidence of its efficiency as a means of obtaining the desired boon, or some equivalent blessing, there is nothing unreal in the employment; and, therefore, nothing enthusiastic. But there are devotional exercises which, though they assume the style and phrases of prayer, have no other object than to attain the immediate pleasures of excitement. The devotee is not in truth a *petitioner*, for his prayers terminate in themselves; and if he reaches the expected pitch of transient emotion, he desires nothing more. This appetite for feverish agitations naturally prompts a quest of whatever is exorbitant in expression or sentiment, and as naturally inspires a dread of all those subjects of meditation which tend to abate the pulse of the moral system. If the language of humiliation is at all admitted into the enthusiast's devotions, it must be so pointed with extravagance, and so blown out with exaggerations, that it serves much more to tickle the fancy than to affect the heart: it is a burlesque of penitence, very proper to amuse a mind that is destitute of real contrition. That such artificial humiliations do not spring

*Three following oversights 1<sup>st</sup> and the  
Queen bee the King of Error. The identification  
of Reason with the individual understanding  
terms not only different but otherwise not only  
allogeneous but heterogeneous. 2 The*



*substitution of the Infinite for the Absolute, in respect of  
God, and the divine Attributes. I forbid you, says  
Plato, to call God the Infinite. Say rather if you dare  
name him at all, the Measure of Infinity. & rather*

from the sorrow of repentance, is proved by their bringing with them no lowliness of temper. Genuine humility would shake the whole towering structure of this enthusiastic pietism; and, therefore, in the place of Christian humbleness of mind, there are cherished certain ineffable notions of self-annihilation, and self-renunciation, and we know not what other attempts at metaphysical suicide. If you receive the enthusiast's description of himself, he has become, in his own esteem, by continued force of divine contemplation, infinitely less than an atom—a very negative quality—an incalculable fraction of positive entity: meanwhile the whole of his deportment betrays the sensitiveness of a self-importance ample enough for a god.

Minds of a superior order, and refined by culture, may be full fraught with enthusiasm without exhibiting any very reprehensible extravagances: for taste and intelligence conceal the offensiveness of error as well as of vice. But it will not be so with the gross and the uneducated. These, if they are taught to neglect the substantial purposes of prayer, and are encouraged to seek chiefly the gratifications of excitement, will hardly refrain from the utterance of discontent, when they fail of success. Whatever physical or accidental cause may oppress the animal spirits, and frustrate the attempt to reach the desired pitch of emotion, gives occasion to some sort of querulous altercation with the Supreme Being, or to some disguised imputations of caprice on the part of

D 2

*The habit of using the term infinite, itself, as a  
superlative, if not a synonyme of vast, large, or  
indefinitely great.*

*I employ the term Reason in its most  
comprehensive sense and for the Practical as well as the*



*Theorie on Contemplative Reason for the Light and  
for the Life in the Light - in short, at the Logos, or the  
Word" on whom is Life, and that Life the only true  
Light of Man. And the difference between my scheme*

Him who is supposed to have withheld the expected spiritual influence. Thus the divine condescension in holding intercourse with man on the level of friendship, is abused in this wantonness of irreverence; and the very same temper which impels a man of vulgar manners, when disappointed in his suit, to turn upon his superior with rude opprobriums, is, in its degree, indulged towards the Majesty of heaven. "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself," is a rebuke which belongs to those who thus affront the Most High with the familiarities of common companionship. We say not that flagrant abuses of this kind are of frequent occurrence, even among the uneducated; yet neither are they quite unknown. A perceptible tendency towards them always accompanies the enthusiastic notion that the principal part of piety is excitement.

The substitution of the transient and unreal, for the real and enduring objects of prayer, brings with it often that sort of ameliorated mysticism which consists in a solicitous dissection of the changing emotions of the religious life, and in a sickly sensitiveness, which serves only to divert attention from what is important in practical virtue. There are anatomists of piety who destroy all the freshness and vigour of faith and hope and charity, by immuring themselves, night and day, in the infected atmosphere of their own bosoms. Let a man of warm heart, who is

*and that of the Essayist, for whose talents and  
intentions feel sincere respect, may perhaps be  
thus stated. The Essayist would bring down his  
understanding to his religion: I would raise*



up my understanding to the Reason vouchsafed to me,  
and find my religion in the Focus resulting from  
their convergence. ~~we~~ both use the same prayer.

happily surrounded with the dear objects of the social affections, try the effect of a parallel practice;—let him institute anxious scrutinies of his feelings towards those whom, hitherto, he has believed himself to regard with unfeigned love;—let him use in these inquiries all the fine distinctions of a casuist, and all the profound analyses of a metaphysician, and spend hours daily in pulling asunder every complex emotion of tenderness that has given grace to the domestic life; and, moreover, let him journalize these examinations, and note particularly, and with the scrupulosity of an accomptant, how much of the mass of his kindly sentiments he has ascertained to consist of genuine love, and how much was selfishness in disguise; and let him, from time to time, solemnly resolve to be, in future, more disinterested and less hypocritical in his affection towards his family. What, at the end of a year, would be the result of such a process? What, but a wretched debility and dejection of the heart, and a strangeness and a sadness of the manners, and a suspension of the native expressions and ready offices of zealous affection? Meanwhile the hesitations and the musings, and the upbraidings of an introverted sensibility absorb the thoughts. Is it, then, reasonable to presume that similar practices in religion can have a tendency to promote the healthful vigour of piety?

By the constitution of the human mind, its emotions are strengthened in no other way than

h37. Just  
thought to beante  
fully expressed  
but nothing to  
the point in  
question. The  
folly of making  
a hole in the  
Linn to look  
after the  
Music is  
surely no  
proof of the  
wisdom of  
playing  
out of tune

penitential, deprecative and petitionary. I in the  
full assurance of their conformity with the truth of  
Reason, the in the petitionous oblivion of their being  
the contrary. S.T.C.



24 X  
temper, and the spirit of the formularies of the English church, all discourage the attempt to hold forth the subjects of evangelical teaching in the gorgeous colours of an artificial oratory. And if the evidence of facts were listened to, such attempts would never be made by men who honestly desire to discharge the momentous duties of the Christian ministry in the manner most conducive to the welfare of their hearers. A blaze of emotion, having the semblance of piety, may be kindled by descriptive and impassioned harangues, such as those that are heard on days of festival from French and Italian pulpits; but it will be found that the Divine Spirit, without whose agency the heart is never permanently affected, sternly refuses to become a party in any such theatric exercises: the emotions will therefore subside without leaving a vestige of salutary influence.

Yet is there perhaps a lawful range open, in the pulpit, to the powers of descriptive eloquence. The preacher may embellish all those subsidiary topics that are not included within the circle of the primary principles on which the religious affections are built; for in addressing the imagination on these accessary points, he does not incur the danger of founding piety altogether upon illusions. The great and beautiful in nature, and perhaps the natural attributes of the Deity, and the episodes of sacred history, and the diversities of human character, and the scenes of