

Christians, as above defined, merely because their religious opinions and practices differ from our own, namely:

- (i.) Carrying on aggressive and destructive work against them;
- (ii.) Refusing to unite with them in the same organic Church under conditions which permit us, as individuals, to retain our own distinct views; or
- (iii.) Declining to join with them in resisting attacks against our common Christianity.

P. V. SMITH.



ART. IV. — HENRY SUSO: THE MINNE-SINGER OF ETERNAL LOVE AND WISDOM.

THERE were two main forces at work in Christendom previous to the Reformation, *Mysticism* and *Scholasticism*, the one fostered chiefly amongst the branches of the Germanic stock, the other belonging more to the Romanic tribes. The one deals with Christianity from the subjective side, as a frame of mind, an inward spirit, a Divine life; the other is enlisted for the most part upon the objective side, and recognises Christianity more as a doctrine and revelation than a life. Mysticism preserved among the nations the Christian spirit in its fulness of life and practical power. Scholasticism devoted its chief attention to the formal elaboration of Christian ideas, and the exercise of argument in the schools. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries it became ever more and more exclusively theoretical and pedantic, wedded to formalism and subtleties, and useless for life. On the other hand, mysticism grew and spread abroad, especially in Germany and the Netherlands. It contained a more vigorous germ of vitality, assumed a more popular and practical character, and appropriated increasingly the new and important element of Scripture truth which was in that day of growing thought making itself felt on every side. Allying itself with the freshly-emerging love of the Bible, it hastened on the Reformation; whereas scholasticism—antiquated, artificial, unpractical—was assailed and routed from the field. The mystic turns in his inmost heart directly to God; he yields up himself to Him; he desires even to become one with Him. One of these mystics makes the soul to speak, "I have found rest in nothing but in Nothing." This Nothing is the pure Deity; for "the place out of which I was born is the Deity—it is my fatherland." He is his own priest, altar, and sacrifice; and even

although he may not reject or neglect outward sacerdotal mediation, yet he views it as a thing non-essential and subordinate. The antithesis of scholasticism and mysticism has been well expressed by the formulas, "Wherever the Church is, there also are Christ and the Spirit of God," and "Wherever Christ and the Spirit of God are, there also is the Church." The former saying marks the standpoint of the scholastic theologian, and the latter that of the mystic theologian. Mysticism roots itself, if I may so say, in union with God and Christ, and thence spring up the flowers and fruits of holiness, peace, and salvation.

Mysticism, while essentially the same, displays great diversities of form—the poetical, the sentimental, the speculative, and the practical. Each of these may be said to be represented by some distinct personality. Practical mysticism finds its embodiment, so to speak, in John Staupitz, the old Augustinian monk, who led Luther into the light. Speculative mysticism is seen in Master Eckart, and in the famous book "German Theology," which impregnated the society of the time with reformatory ideas. Sentimental mysticism is represented by John Tauler, known among his contemporaries by the honourable name of *theologus sublimis et illuminatus*; and poetical mysticism finds its most representative name in Henry Suso, "the Minne-Singer of eternal love and wisdom," and "the particular friend of God."

Henry von Berg was born at Constance at the close of the thirteenth or beginning of the fourteenth century. His mother—whose family name of Suess, signifying *sweet*, Latinized into Suso, he adopted—was, it would seem, a devoted Christian, "full of the mighty God," as her son expressed it. The father, unhappily, was a worldly-minded man, with tastes and inclinations the very reverse of those of his wife. This want of spiritual communion on their part led to domestic trouble and unhappiness. As in the case of Monica, Suso's mother endured much harshness at the hands of her husband. He was violently opposed to religion. For thirty years, we are told, she never attended public worship for fear of his anger. But she bore the trial bravely, and "possessed her soul in patience," devoting herself to her husband's comfort and her son's spiritual welfare. And the filial loyalty and love of her son, who was from a very early age in full sympathy with "his holy mother" in faith and life, brightened many a dark hour, and often comforted her when the heart within was like to break.

In appearance the young Suso was, like David of Israel, "ruddy and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to." He had from youth up a warm and loving heart—

A spirit laughs and leaps through every limb,
And lights his eye——

And his vigorous mind, poetical genius, and versatile talents marked him out from his early years for a distinguished career. Poetry, however, was evidently the predominating element in his mind. He sees everything in tropes and figures. The objects of sense are to him symbolic of objects loftier and more mysterious. Even his speculative reasonings clothe themselves, if I may so say, in gorgeous imagery. His language is never abstract, but always fresh and lively, richly coloured, and often in a high degree impassioned. He is "the Minne-Singer of eternal love and wisdom," imbued with the speculative notions of mysticism, often transcendental and obscure, but at the same time in practical sympathy with life, and whatever tends to adorn and elevate life.

As with Augustine, Wesley, Washington, and many others, Suso's first religious impressions were given by his mother. She watched over his youthful years with patient and tender care, and sought to direct his mind to the service of God, and all the more on account of the virulent antagonism of his father to Christian truth. Stories are told of his poetical piety, as we may call it, even in the period of childhood. He used, when a boy, to gather flowers in the fields and gardens, and twine the most beautiful of them into a garland with which to decorate the image of the Virgin, because, as he said, she was "the loveliest of all flowers, and the summer rapture of his heart." At the age of thirteen he entered the Dominican convent at Constance, and there gave himself with zeal to the studies that were chiefly pursued in that age. For the first five years of his monastic life he felt no inward awakening. His heart seems to have been unchanged by the influence of the Holy Spirit. But there was a restlessness in his mind, and a dissatisfaction with his state, which showed that he was feeling after God, and that the Spirit was casting His mysterious and holy spell upon him. In his eighteenth year he took the first step in the spiritual life; he felt himself secretly drawn, and "as it were by a bright light," to God. This soon wrought in him an entire change. In an autobiography he relates that from the age of eighteen to that of forty he disciplined himself by strict observances of devotion, by severe ascetic exercises, and even by tortures, the object of all being an entire abandonment and resignation of self to the Divine will, in imitation of the Saviour's example. He was seized, he tells us, with "an ardent desire to become and to be called a servant of Eternal Wisdom." Like the wise king of Israel, he personifies Eternal Wisdom, and represents her as a lady of heavenly purity and loveliness, to whom his heart was always going out, and from whom all love flows.

In what rich and glowing colours he paints his celestial mistress! "She floated high above him in the vaulted choir, she shone like the morning star, and seemed as the sun sporting in the dawn. Her crown was eternity, her robe was bliss, her word sweetness, her embrace the fulness of all delight. She was distant and yet near, high aloft and yet deep below. She was present and yet unseen, accessible and yet not palpable to the touch. She accosted him affectionately, and gently said, Give me thy heart, my child! He knelt at her feet and thanked her from his inmost heart, and in deep humility." A similar incident is related of St. Lawrence Justinian, first patriarch of Venice. His biographer tells us that when he was in his nineteenth year he seemed one day to see in a vision the Eternal Wisdom in the disguise of a damsel, shining brighter than the sun, and to hear from her the following words: "Why seekest thou rest out of thyself, now in this object and now in that? What thou desirest is to be found only in me. . . . Seek it in me, who am the wisdom of God." And that instant, it is said, he found his soul so pierced with the charms and incomparable honour of this invitation of Divine grace, that he felt himself inflamed with new ardour to give himself up entirely to the search of the holy knowledge and love of God. And the great mystic of a later time, Jacob Boehme, tells us of a gracious maiden from Paradise who met him and offered him her love, and showed him the way to Paradise. This maiden who plays so great a part in his apprehension of God is "the precious Sophia," the heavenly Wisdom, who not only reveals to him the Divine mysteries, but espouses his soul, reforms him by leading him to God in Christ, consoles him in his distress, and conducts him to peace and salvation.

The wisdom to which Suso now consecrated his heart and life involved in it two things—pure intelligence and complete sanctification, holy thought and holy affection. He might say, like Amiel of modern days, so unlike him in almost everything else: "To love and to think are the only imperative needs of my nature." But his thought was about the high mysteries of Christianity, and his love was the love of God, and the love of man for God's sake. He himself says, "I was called a dutiful father of the poor. Of all the *friends of God* I was the *particular friend*. All persons who were in sorrow and trouble came to me, and obtained each some word of counsel, so that they went happy and comforted away; for I wept with those that wept, and mourned with those that mourned, until I had restored them like a mother."

At this time,

Yearning in desire
To follow knowledge,

he went, accompanied "by a good comrade," to the University of Cologne. Here he studied with ardour scholastic philosophy and theology, and made himself familiar with what he calls "virtuous heathen masters, especially with the judicious Aristotle," and tells us, anticipating the reasonings of Ray and Paley, that he "had diligently sought and found the Lord of Nature, and had demonstrated from Nature's well-adjusted course that there must necessarily be one sole Sovereign and Lord of all the creatures." These questions, however, soon gave place to others of a more congenial kind. His mind was more poetical and contemplative than discursive and logical, and henceforth he gave himself to the theology of experience and love.

At that time mysticism was represented at Cologne by Henry Eckart, one of the most remarkable men of the Mediæval Age, who is described by Trithemius as *ingenio subtilis et clarus eloquio*. Well acquainted with the Aristotelian scholasticism of the day, but more attracted by Plato, "the great priest," as he calls him, and his Alexandrian followers, imbued with the mystical element in the works of Augustine, though not with his doctrine of original sin, and setting out from the principles laid down by the earlier mystics of the Middle Ages and the pantheistic doctrines of the Brethren of the Free Spirit, Eckart with great originality constructed out of these heterogeneous elements a system which, though not intended by him, struck at the very foundations of the Church, and may be regarded as the most important mediæval prelude to the speculations of Coleridge, and, indeed, to the rationalizing and pantheistic tendencies of modern times. The limits of this article do not permit me to elaborate the peculiar theories of Eckart, but it may be briefly stated that his fundamental notion is God's eternal efflux from Himself, and no less eternal reflex into Himself—the procession of the creature from God, and the return of the creature, by self-denial and elevation above all that is of a created nature, back into God again. Eckart does not sufficiently distinguish between the Creator and the creature, and in his poem, "A soul lay at the feet of God," he represents the relation between them as more natural than personal and moral.

So naturalized art Thou in me,
That naught remains 'twixt me and Thee.

Thus Eckart stands sponsor to what we may call theoretic pantheism and practical mysticism. And Suso became one of Eckart's most loving and devoted disciples. He is the only one among his teachers to whom Suso alludes by name. He calls him the "high, the holy" master, and his "sweet"

doctrine a "generous drink." He expresses in lively terms his gratitude to him for "calming" his inward troubles, reminding us of the words in which Matthew Arnold praises his "master" Wordsworth for assuaging that dim trouble of humanity which other poets, like Goethe and Byron, could only dissect and describe.

He laid us as we lay at birth,
On the cool flowery lap of earth,
Smiles broke from us and we had ease.

There can be no doubt that Eckart was the first to confirm Suso in the elements of mysticism. He embraced his principle of union with God by self-annihilation. At the same time, he never entirely occupied the ground of pantheism, on which his teacher so much speculated and reasoned. It is true that pantheistic allusions occur in his writings; but when they are carefully examined, his thought and teaching will be found to be essentially theistic. He has himself given a summary of his doctrine in those pregnant words, "A meek man must be *deformed* from the creature, *conformed* to Christ, and *transformed* into the Deity." And, in expansion of this thought, he goes on to say the property most peculiar to God is that He is Being—pure, simple, undivided, universal Being. This pure and simple Being is the supreme and original Cause of all being, and includes all existences as their Beginning and End. God is a circle, he says, whose centre is everywhere, but whose circumference is nowhere. The simpler any being is, the richer it is in power and efficiency. That which possesses nothing gives nothing away; that which possesses much has much to bestow. God possesses in Himself the fulness of being; He is the all-perfect good, and must therefore be in His nature communicative, and give forth Himself from Himself. In creation man occupies the chief place. In one respect, as a created being, he is finite and transitory; at the same time, he has also been ennobled by the supreme transcendental Spirit shedding into him the beams of His eternal Godhead. This is the image of God in the mind, which is also eternal. In depicting spiritual men "divested of self, submissive, and conformed to Christ," Suso, in sublime flights of poetry, speaks as if they were wholly absorbed into the Godhead, and represents God as saying to them, "I will embrace them so closely and lovingly that they and I, and I and they, and all of us together, shall continue a single unit for ever and ever." This sounds indeed, pantheistic, but not more so than the language of Wordsworth, who says, speaking of the living principle of all nature:

From link to link,
It circulates the soul of all the worlds;

or than that of Cowper, who says :

There lives and works
A soul in all things, and that soul is God ;

or than that of Pope, whose phraseology is more striking still :

All are but parts of one stupendous whole
Whose body Nature is, and God the soul.

The sentiment, similar in all these poets, might be characterized as pantheistic ; and yet the whole spirit and tenor of their poetry is antagonistic to the degrading and dreary idea of God embodied in pantheism. Each of them had the firmest faith in the great foundation-truth of the Personality of God, on whom all other personality hangs, and in whose eye it dwells.

God, before whom ever lie bare
The abyssal deeps of Personality.

Suso likewise everywhere recognises a personal Deity, and discriminates between a Divine *Thou* and the human *I*. He expressly maintains the distinctness of the Divine Being, even in the perfect extinction of the creature. His words are : "The Spirit's annihilation and transition into the Godhead, and its whole nobleness and perfection, are not to be taken as a transmutation of man's nature in such a way as that he is God ; . . . or that he becomes God, and his own being is destroyed. But it consists in escaping from and contemning one's self. The spirit passes away. God has become all things to it, and all things have in a manner become God ; for all things answer to it according to the manner in which they are in God, *and yet everything continues to be what it is in its natural being* ; and that is what an intellect unpractised in this true distinction cannot, or will not, admit into its confused apprehension."

Here is seen the great difference between Suso's Christian pantheism, which does not make creation and nature necessities to God, although emanations from Him, and those schemes of thought which involve God in nature. In the pantheism of Suso nature is separate and apart from God, though clothed by His will as with a garment.

In Being's flood, in Action's storm.

Suso is, in fact, no more a pantheist of the Spinoza type—which ignores will, and personality, and moral character in God—than St. Paul, who speaks of "the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." "Of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things."

Suso had consecrated himself entirely to heavenly *love*. Love was the Alpha and Omega of his religion. Aristotle has said in words, which Dante has splendidly transfigured, that

“God draws the world to Himself as Love”; and in a religion of feeling like that of Suso, love will be the beginning and the end. With an iron stylus he wrote the name of Jesus in his breast, and called himself the “Amandus,” or “lover,” of his heavenly Beloved One. He was aware, however, as he tells us, “that it belongs to love of ancient right to suffer; that none but a sufferer can woo her well, nor prove a true lover, without being a martyr.” And accordingly he subjected himself to severe and rigorous bodily austerities and mortifications. His sufferings were of the painfullest kind. Though bright and lively in his nature, and in sympathy with the joyous aspect of creation, he shut himself up in the dull retirement of the cloister, observed the most unbroken silence, and inflicted upon himself penances that “went to the blood and marrow,” and “made all his nature a waste.” He came to see, however, as light shone into the chambers of his soul, that such severity was not demanded of him—that, in the words of the Apostle, “bodily exercise profiteth little”; and he accordingly ceased to torment himself, and allowed his body proper and moderate care. And now Suso entered, to use the phrase of the time, “the upper school,” where he set himself to learn the art of perfect resignation to the Divine will. He laboured to subdue self, and to acquiesce with joy in every dispensation of Providence, after the example of the heavenly Master, who said, “Not my will, but Thine be done.” Here began the term of what is called Suso’s spiritual knighthood. In the constitution of his mind he united the qualities which his age most highly prized—the enthusiasm and gentleness of the poet, the fortitude of the soldier, and the devotion of the saint and martyr, and all in that fanciful and romantic style which belonged to the character of the mediæval period. All his life long he was a soldier at heart. The enthusiasm which he felt bordered on the burning devotion of Dominic, who preceded him, or on the stern consecration of Loyola, who came after him. He tells us that a beautiful youth appeared to him in a vision, led him into a spiritual land, brought him knightly shoes and armour, and said, “Know that hitherto thou hast been a mere squire. It is God’s will that thou be henceforth a knight.” And it was intimated to him that this term of knighthood would involve him in greater hardship “than all the celebrated heroes of antiquity endured.” “Survey the heavens above thy head,” was the language of the youth to him. “If thou canst count the multitude of the stars, then mayest thou also count the sufferings that await thee. And as the stars appear little, and yet are of vast magnitude, so are thy sufferings small in the eyes of inexperienced men, but in thine own sense of them they will be great to endure.”

Accordingly a long series of inward trials followed—collapses of faith, despondency, doubts of his salvation, the treachery of friends, and the malicious attacks of foes, false accusations. However, he regarded all contradiction as a spiritual task allotted to him by God, and all trial as a necessary discipline to prepare him for the "Father's house." And at last, when he had nobly and trustfully borne all the heavy burdens laid upon him, and learnt the meaning of the precept which he once seemed to hear the Saviour enjoin upon him, "Take suffering willingly; bear suffering patiently; learn to suffer like Christ," he was released, and "attained to inward peace of mind, calm repose, and lightsome grace. But it was given him to perceive," his biographer goes on to say, "that by this overthrow he had been more nobly translated from self into God than by all the manifold sufferings which, from his youth up until that hour, he had ever endured."

The way to God, teaches Suso, leads to God, leads through Christ in His sufferings. The degrees of this mystical life are purification, which is the expulsion of all creaturely desires; illumination, which fills the soul with Divine forms; and perfection, "which consists in high intuition, in fervent love, and sweet enjoying of the highest good." He who would attain to the higher perfection must rise above nine things, some of which are the senses, natural desire, and "images and imagination." These he calls "nine rocks," or steps, by which man, who would rise to God, must be elevated to a union with Him. St. Augustine had set forth the same thought long before: "De vitiis nostris scalam nobis facimus, si vitia ipsa calcamus." The opening words of "In Memoriam" make allusion to this fine thought:

I hold it truth with him who sings
 To one clear harp in divers tones,
 That men may rise on stepping-stones
 Of their dead selves to higher things.

And Longfellow builds his beautiful poem of "The Ladder of St. Augustine" on the same sentiment:

Saint Augustine! well hast thou said,
 That of our vices we can frame
 A ladder, if we will but tread
 Beneath our feet each deed of shame!

In his life Suso combined appreciation of active service in the world with deep reverence for monastic contemplativeness. He was always a great lover of nature. He loved all beautiful sights and sounds. Flowers had a perennial charm for him. And in this respect he was different from his famous contemporary, Tauler, of whom it is related that, in passing through the convent garden, he drew his cap over his eyes in

order that the flowers might not disturb him in his abstract spiritual meditations. Suso found a thousand charms in the world around him. Every year, we are told, he celebrated in a "spiritual hymn" the glories of the spring resurrection. He spent much time in the solitude of his convent in prayer, thought, and meditation; and he also laboured diligently with tongue and pen in preaching and helping troubled minds in difficulty and doubt. He became somewhat famous as a preacher, and travelled over Swabia, Alsace, and into the Netherlands, gaining everywhere, we are told, "faithful lovers for eternal wisdom, and true friends for God." His eloquence seems to have been of a high order. It united depth with clearness, severe earnestness with affectionate suavity, and glowed throughout with that fire of enthusiasm which burns into the hearts of the hearers. His countenance shone when he spoke, and his whole soul seemed to come forth in the passionate and pathetic words which fell from his lips. He took the creatures and the whole creation, it has been said, into his heart, that he might bear them aloft to the heart of God. This sentiment he has expressed with inimitable beauty in his exposition of the formula, *Sursum Corda*. His language reminds us of that of Bishop Jeremy Taylor. "These words," he says, "have always awakened within me three emotions, either single or combined. First, I placed myself with all that I am, body and soul, and every faculty before my inward eye, and around me I set all the creatures ever made by God in the realms of heaven, on earth, and in the elements, each with its own peculiar name. There were birds of the air, beasts of the forest, fish of the water, leaves and grass of the ground, innumerable pebbles of the deep, and, besides these, all the little atoms that glimmer in the sunbeam, and all the water-drops that ever fell, or are now falling, from dew, or snow, or rain; and my desire for them was that every one, from first to last, should have a sweet and piercing instrument of music, formed of my heart's inmost sap, on which to play, and raise a new and high-souled laud to the praise of the loved and loving God from eternity to eternity. And then passionately were the loving arms of my soul stretched far and wide towards the innumerable multitudes of created things, and it was my wish to enlist them all in this work, just as a free and cheerful leader stirs up his fellows in the choir to sing with alacrity and offer up their hearts to God—*Sursum Corda*."

The greater part of Suso's life appears to have been spent in his convent at Constance, where for the purposes of silent contemplation and prayer he possessed a secret chapel decorated, as he himself has told us, with pictures. At a later period we find him in a convent at Ulm. And here he

died on January 25 (the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul) in the year 1365, about the sixtieth year of his age. In the cloisters rests his body until the resurrection at the last day.

We do not agree with all the views of Suso and his fellow-mystics. Here and there we find them swerving into serious errors, and conforming to religious practices of a puerile or superstitious nature, but on the whole they are distinguished by a simple and tenacious adherence to the central doctrines of the faith and an earnest desire to elevate the tone of personal religion. Their mysticism lifted them to a higher and more beautiful region than that in which most men were living. They were the

Scattered few,
Living to God and Nature, and content
With that communion.

“There is a sublime uncomplaining melancholy traceable in these old hearts. A great, free glance into the very deeps of thought.”

They have the grief men had of yore,
But they contend and cry no more.

Those mystics had fine intuitions. They lived mostly in the midst of silence; they loved to dwell in a deep mysterious night of the spirit. Their mysticism fed itself in ecstasies and things rather felt than seen. Their souls lived as in a passive dream. They were fond of feeling that they had plunged into God; “in Him,” in a higher sense than that in which the Apostle spoke, “they lived and moved and had their being.” The circumstances of their lives, the country round about them, the forest glades, the lakes, the “old-world abbey walls,” the secluded dells, were favourable to their ecstatic mind-life. Nature very often, marvellously unperceived by them, must yet have as certainly influenced, even when not colouring, their stream of thought; sometimes, as in the case of Suso, it did give a new life to thought of the infinite love of God. It could hardly have been otherwise, living mostly in his convent on the solitary little isle, surrounded by the blue waters of the Lake of Constance, its shores clothed with dark pine-woods, and the country stretching away to the terraced vine-clad heights of the Rhine beyond. There is one sweet passage in which he speaks of the planets and the glorious sun—leaves, grass and flowers, bursting into forest thicket and meadow ringing with the song of birds. “All the dear little creatures,” he says, “which were shut up in the hard winter burst into life and rejoice in the sunshine, while among mankind young and old are wild with joy and happiness. Ah! dear, kind God,” he continues, “if Thou art so full of love in Thy creatures, how lovely, how happy must Thou be in Thine own Self!”

The aim of this devoted mystic from his earliest years was the cultivation of the divine life. His corporeal austerities, his prayers, his meditations, his sacramental exercises, were all used for this purpose. He was at times mistaken; he fell into grievous superstition; he gave an undue preponderance to means that would seem to us somewhat trivial and puerile, but the motive which influenced him in all he did and said and endured was high and noble, and the design of his effort always was the growth of his spiritual nature into a nearer likeness to God. He lived for God; he lived with God; he lived in God and God in him. He felt that only the pure in heart could see God; and hence he strove ever to cleanse himself from sin, to wean his heart from earthly things, and to lose himself in the pure splendour of the Divine Being. Only to the pure in heart is it given to recognise the splendour of His glory in the beautiful things He has created. Hence Suso laboured after purity of heart. All through the Middle Ages this pearl among the virtues was extolled in a very high degree. Poetry sang its praises. Chivalry fought for it. Preachers proclaimed its beauty and its power.

Sir Percivale,
Whom Arthur and his knighthood called the Pure,
enjoys the rare privilege of seeing the Holy Grail because of
this great virtue. Sir Launcelot fails, alas! in his quest be-
cause of his sin. Sir Galahad's virgin heart,

Whom God made good as beautiful,
endows him with a strength which nothing can subdue.

My good blade carves the casques of men,
My tough lance thrusteth sure;
My strength is as the strength of ten,
Because my heart is pure.

Pure, ineffably pure and sweet and good, was Suso; bright and clever, too, full of a divine ardour, earnest and happy in his life, whether it was passed within cloistered walls, in meditation and prayer and writing, or in the active exercises of the pulpit and in the gathering together and consolidating quiet societies of "friends of God" and "good children." His life was a holy life. He lived in God and for God, and when his life on earth came to an end he went to be with God, leaving behind him a blessed memory, a holy example, and lessons which ought not to be forgotten, amid the feverish activities of our utilitarian days.

All that is truest which the world derides,
The gift of loving and the worth of life,
The strength of faith, the holiness of strife,
My tears and prayers besides.

These, in the words of a French poet, and much else that is worthy to be loved and prized, have come to us from Henry Suso, the old "Minne-singer of Eternal Love and Wisdom," and "the particular Friend of God."

WILLIAM COWAN.



ART. V.—THE NEW CREATION.¹

"If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature."—2 Cor. v. 17.

"CREATURE"—"Creation": what a wide and deep meaning have these two cognate words! To know their meaning fully would be to come to the end of all scientific inquiry. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," but the formless matter existed before this globe took form and shape.

"By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear," says the inspired writer. The development of the visible universe from the invisible is one of the grandest ideas of modern science.

The forming or shaping of the worlds, the evolution of their beautiful order out of *χάος*, takes us back to the "Beginning [in which] God created the heavens and the earth;" but this statement has no meaning, unless there was something for the formative, the creative, will to act upon. Try, if you will, to realize to yourself the idea of "making something out of nothing." You cannot; the thing is unthinkable. So, on the other hand, is it just as difficult to take in the opposite idea—that matter is eternal, that it never had a beginning and can never have an end. On this the Bible tells us, and professes to tell us, simply nothing at all. Without attempting to teach men physical truth, for the discovery of which God has endowed them with proper faculties, it tells us much of the action of Almighty Power in forming and upholding and controlling the present order of things; and the furthest point to which scientific inquiry has been pushed can tell us nothing, absolutely nothing, of the source and inner essence of *life*. It can tell us much (and this is, as

¹ A sermon preached at Beeston, Nottingham, on Sunday, September 17, 1893, on the occasion of the Nottingham meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, by Rev. A. Irving, B.A., D.Sc., Vicar of Hockerill, Herts, late Science-Master of Wellington College, Berks; formerly second master of Nottingham High School.