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BIOGRAPHY.

BRIEF MEMOIRS OF THE REV. MR. SAMUEL CLARK, LATE
MINISTER AT BIRMINGHAM.

MR. Samuel Clark had the honour to descend from a family which, for many generations, had been eminent for learning and piety; who had also been distinguished by their conscientious attachment to the cause of non-conformity, for which some of them were no inconsiderable sufferers. One of these was Mr. Samuel Clark, of St. Bennet Fink, London, the author of various useful publications, particularly, "The Martyrology," "The Marrow of Ecclesiastical History," and "Lives of many eminent Persons." Another was the son of the former, Mr. Samuel Clark of Aylesbury, who wrote the Annotations on Scripture; a grandson of whom, and the father of the subject of these memoirs, was the Rev. Samuel Clark, D. D. many years a dissenting minister at St. Alban's. He was the patron of Dr. Doddridge in his early years, who preached his funeral sermon, in which may be seen a high and deserved character of him. He published a valuable piece on "The Promises of God," and some useful discourses on "Irresolution in Religion." Among many excellent qualities, he was distinguished by the pains he took with the young persons under his pastoral care, and in the education of his own children.

This his eldest son, who was early inclined and devoted to the Christian ministry, had peculiar advantages under the instructions and from the example of such a father; so that he went to the academy at Northampton, under the direction of Dr. Doddridge, furnished with a good store of classical learning, as well as maxims of prudence and religious principles; and the long intimacy which had subsisted between his father and his tutor, secured him every advantage that he could enjoy in that situation; which he improved to the utmost, so as to make the greatest proficiency in every thing that could qualify him for appearing with reputation and usefulness in the station which he was designated to fill. His pious father, though ad-

vanced in years, and bowed down with infirmities, lived to see him enter on the ministry in a manner which delighted his heart, but died soon afterwards.

On the conclusion of his academical studies, such was the character he had acquired for learning, prudence, and piety, that Dr. Doddridge took him to be his assistant in the academy; and he conducted himself in this important station so much to the Doctor's satisfaction, that when he was obliged by severe illness to desist from his laborious services as a minister and tutor, and, on the ill-judged advice of his physicians, took a voyage to Lisbon, with a view to the recovery of his health, he committed the care both of his congregation and of the academy to Mr. Clark, who was then but twenty-three years of age.

During the Doctor's painful absence from his family and flock, he often mentioned it to his friends, as a singular happiness to him, that God had given him an assistant to whom he could cheerfully leave the care of his academy and congregation; and "whose great prudence and wise disposition of affairs made him quite easy as to both." So he expressed himself in a letter to a friend, written from Bristol*.

The manner in which he discharged this important trust not only gave general satisfaction, but greatly surprised all who were acquainted with it, and raised the highest idea of his talents, and the excellent dispositions of his heart. It must not, however, be concealed, that though the Doctor's congregation highly respected Mr. Clark, and thought themselves greatly obliged to him for his services during their pastor's absence, he was not sufficiently popular and Calvinistical fully to satisfy the generality of them, so as to be chosen assistant to the Doctor's successor in the ministerial part of his office, which, it is well known, was the principal reason of the removal of the academy from Northampton to Daventry, where Mr. Caleb Ashworth was then minister, whom Dr. Doddridge had warmly recommended to succeed him, both in the academy and the congregation, and who would himself have been acceptable at least to the great majority of the people. But he knew too well the value of Mr. Clark as an assistant tutor to part with him, and therefore determined to remain at Daventry, where Mr. Clark was used to preach once in a month, with the consent of the people, who highly venerated his character, though his strain and manner were not quite to their taste.

In the academy he conducted himself so as to give the highest

* Orton's Life of Doddridge, p. 339.

satisfaction to the students, as well as to his worthy colleague, and to command not merely the esteem but the veneration of both. His gentleness of disposition was accompanied with such a dignity in his look and deportment as to maintain his authority, and secure order and regularity, more effectually than words could do.

Dr. Ashworth, in his funeral sermon for Mr. Clark, expresses his sense of his worth, and his importance to this institution, in the following words:—"When the academy was removed to Daventry, he kindly continued in it for five years; and I take pleasure in acknowledging, in this public manner, that his friendship, his abilities, and his prudent counsels, were of essential service, and mainly contributed to the reputation and success, whatever they have been, with which that institution has been conducted."

Having discovered an inclination to apply himself more fully to the services of the Christian ministry, Mr. Clark was invited by the congregation at the Old Meeting in Birmingham to be joint pastor with the Rev. Mr. William Howell; and he removed thither at Midsummer in the year 1757.

In what manner he conducted himself in that situation cannot be better expressed than in Dr. Ashworth's own words, in the above discourse. After a brief account of the former part of his life, to his removal to Birmingham, the Doctor adds—"And here I might naturally close the detail. I need not tell you, that 'the heart of his colleague hath safely trusted in him,' and that they have lived together, for more than twelve years, in the most entire harmony, friendship, and confidence. I need not tell you, how he 'preached the word in season, and out of season'—what pains he took to know the state of his flock, and how assiduously he attended to all the cases which might more especially demand a pastor's care—how constantly and affectionately he attended the sick—how diligently he sought out the distressed—how liberally he imparted to them of the substance with which God had blessed him—and with what spirit he entered into all schemes of public charity, especially for the relief of the sick and the instruction of the poor. I need not tell you with how much condescension and affability he, who was courted by the learned and polite, and knew how to relish their company, conversed with the poorest and most illiterate; esteeming those (as I have often heard him say) his happy days, which he spent in discoursing with them on religious subjects, with a freedom which some persons in higher life are neither inclined to use nor allow.

"I hope I need not remind you who are entering upon the

world, what various schemes he formed for your benefit, or the prudence and resolution with which he carried them into execution—the youth of the society, what pains he bestowed in catechising you—or you, children, of the obliging and instructive notice he took of you, when occasionally visiting your parents. How much do you owe to such a minister! How dear should his memory be to you!

“ I need not observe in this place, that his general conversation was admirably calculated to do good—that he was always modest and humble, but never mean—that a decent cheerfulness and a flow of good-nature appeared in his familiar visits, without ever sinking below his character; so that it might seem impossible for his acquaintance either not to love or reverence him. You must have remarked his easy natural manner of introducing instructive and serious hints; so that a person must be grievously wanting to himself who spent an hour in his company, without being the wiser and the better; that it appeared to be his concern, wherever he was, to be doing good—and his delight, when an opportunity offered, whoever was the object.

“ His genius was solid and good; his understanding was clear; his judgment, strong; his memory, faithful. His passions were naturally cool, and were brought under the most exact regulation; his affections were warm, and his heart susceptible of the tenderest sentiments; his diligence, resolution, and perseverance, were uncommonly great. His knowledge of the world was so extensive and exact, his penetration so great, his heart so honest, his friendship so sincere, and his tongue under such wise command, that he was consulted by his friends in the most intricate and delicate affairs; and I will venture to say, they never repented of the confidence they reposed in him, and generally saw reason to follow his advice. His usefulness in this view cannot be estimated. This uncommon sagacity was attended with the greatest generosity and the nicest sense of honour; so that I may venture to affirm he was never suspected of meanness, artifice, or cunning. In the character of a son and a brother, he was a finished model: those of a father or a husband he never sustained, but would have shone in both.

“ His conduct as a minister, I have had occasion to mention in various views, but have not been able, in any of them, to do him justice, as you well know”—[the Doctor having kept Mr. Clark in his eye, in illustrating the character and office of Christian ministers, as exhibited in his text, Heb. xiii. 7. Remember them which have had the rule over you;

who have spoken unto you the word of God ; whose faith follow ; considering the end of their conversation.]—“ And you well know that his cares, his influence, his usefulness, and his esteem, were not confined to this congregation, but reached to persons and societies in the neighbourhood, and even to a great distance. In a word, a person of his years, so wise, so useful, so highly esteemed, so universally lamented, I never knew, and I believe has seldom been known.

“ That his years were so few—that he was cut off in the prime of his life and usefulness, and in such an awful manner—are to us matter of unfeigned and bitter lamentation. But let us be silent, considering that God hath done it.”

The manner of his death was peculiarly affecting. As he was going on a Lord's-day morning to preach at Oldbury, a village six miles from Birmingham, which he and his colleague alternately supplied, his horse (which was too spirited) took fright, and threw him in one of the streets of Birmingham. He was taken up senseless, and in that state having languished three days, died, December 6, 1769, in the 42d year of his age.

Mr. Clark published a sermon, while at Daventry, on the earthquake at Lisbon, which was preached by many of the clergy on the fast-day appointed to be kept sometime after that event. There is also a discourse or two of his in the Protestant System, a collection published by Mr. Rose, who married one of his sisters ; another of whom married the Rev. Mr. Hiron, of St. Alban's, who succeeded his father, and who is still living, and preaches in that place.

Mr. Clark maintained a constant correspondence with the Rev. Mr. Job Orton, who had been assistant to Dr. Doddridge in his academy, and frequently consulted him in reference to matters of difficulty ; particularly such as related to ministerial duty—expounding, catechising, visiting the sick, &c. A number of Mr. Orton's letters to him on these subjects were happily preserved, and have lately been published, in a collection of “ Letters from Mr. Orton to Dissenting Ministers and Students,” edited by Mr. Palmer. These letters, addressed to Mr. Clark will serve to give the reader a more complete idea of his character.

Among Mr. Clark's particular friends was the Rev. Mr. Joseph Grigg, who possessed remarkably popular talents, but had no pastoral charge. He resided at St. Alban's, and was kind in assisting his brethren. Several of his pieces, in prose and verse, are inserted in Mr. Harrison's *Miscellanies*, among which are the following lines, addressed—

To the Rev. Mr. CLARK, on Parting.

When friends endear'd by absence meet,
(For absence will endear)
How passionately fond they greet !
How cordially sincere !

Heart flies to heart, with rapid wing,
Reciprocally kind ;
Closer than lovers can they cling,
'Tis mind's embrace of mind.

When rapt in social scenes how blest,
No language can define :
'Tis something—sure, 'tis best express'd,
By that high term “ divine.”

But what, at *parting*, friends sustain,
Far less can language say :
'Tis all that's exquisite of pain,
And scarce with hope's allay.

Since to the theme no terms were just,
The muse no more will try ;
Part oft on earth, my Clark ! we must,
We ne'er shall part on high.

P. R.

SOME PARTICULARS OF DR. PRIESTLEY'S RESIDENCE AT
NORTHUMBERLAND, AMERICA.

LETTER IV.*

To the Editor of the Monthly Repository.

SIR,

WHEN Dr. Priestley left Northumberland for Philadelphia, a second time, while I was there, he put me in possession of his room and books, and gave me some hints how to employ my time during the winter ; which hints I endeavoured to put into practice, though it was at times no easy task, as he had in his service both Dutch and Irish people, and I was obliged at times to contend with the almost unrelenting prejudice of the one, and the nearly inextinguishable fire of the other. At this time the Doctor's library was not arranged in order, but was piled up in heaps, and occupied several rooms. At his new house, a large library was preparing, of sufficient dimensions for their reception.

My acquaintance increased considerably this winter, and with it my wonder at finding so many unbelievers, especially English, at Northumberland, as well as in other parts of America. Many of them were men of considerable abilities, and

* For Letters 1, 2, 3, see pp. 393, 505, and 564.

to their honour, treated Dr. Priestley with great respect and esteem, and at times were ready to say, with King Agrippa—“Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.” But there were not wanting others who were disposed to use the language of Festus, and to say that “Much learning had made him mad, or how was it that he did not altogether reject that persecuting system, Christianity?” There was still another kind of unbelievers that I met with, who were strong supporters both of church and state, but only from political motives; urging as a reason that some system of religion had been, was, and always would be necessary to keep the vulgar in awe, and, in some measure, by its supposed penalties, restrain the impetuosity of their passions, which would otherwise be under no controul. It was, therefore, a necessary evil; and much better was it to submit to pay a horde of priests than, by putting them down, subject our throats to the ravages of the knife. One observation I had frequent occasion to make, that with such a class of men moral excellency was but little regarded; and it was by such men only that Dr. Priestley’s character for sincerity was ever impeached. Destitute themselves of those principles which give firmness and consistency to conduct, and alike strangers to those pure motives which constantly stimulate obedience to the will of God and respect to the characters of men, they would fain have held him up as insincere in his professions, and, like themselves, supporting religion from sinister views. This load of reproach Dr. Priestley had to bear, and even from those who should have been the last to have mentioned his name with disrespect, was he reviled with being a deist, a bigot, and blasphemer. To all this he was not insensible, and, with his usual simplicity and artlessness, remarked to me one day—“If sincerely believing in the divine mission of Moses was deism, then he was a deist: if believing in the inspiration of the prophets was deism, then the charge was just; or if believing that Jesus Christ was the Messiah foretold by the prophets, and that he died and rose again from the dead was deism, then did he merit the appellation.” Respecting bigotry, whatever others have seen to justify that charge, I know not; but I never heard him say one thing uncharitable of any body of professing Christians, or urge any thing upon me merely doctrinal. I recollect hearing him say “he was far from considering himself the wisest of men, though few would pretend to have read more of ecclesiastical history than himself; and that it did not always require a superlative genius to find the door through which some error or other had entered.” To the charge of blasphemy no answer need be made, as every

body is acquainted with the use polemics make of such like epithets.

It appears unnecessary to say much more of this great and good man, whose memory I shall ever cherish with the greatest pleasure, and whose virtues I shall ever revere. He has now finished his warfare below, and to that Master only whom he has so faithfully and honourably served will he have to give an account, and at whose tribunal his own works will be tried, and also the works of those whose ignorance or malignity have led them to cast out his name as evil, and even in some instances to endeavour to sweep him from the face of the earth.

The simplicity and affability of his manners, and the cheerful complacency of his countenance, had a tendency to create respect in the people of Northumberland, in whose esteem he stood, generally speaking, very high; and even in those minds where a high degree of bigotry and prejudice prevailed, at his friendly and winning address their animosity died away, and the smile of good-nature succeeded the lowering gloom of distrust and disaffection. It would be manifesting an undue degree of partiality to say, that Dr. Priestley had no infirmities; but of all men with whom I have been acquainted, he was the best. He was fully conscious of his own imperfections, and therefore daily laboured after further attainments of moral excellence, keeping Jesus his Lord and Master in view, as his true and most complete pattern. Though a crucified man, he was not ashamed of being his disciple; confident that the more exalted he should find him in that new and better life, the more cause he should have to rejoice, having this hope and assurance, that he should be like him, for he should see him as he is.

I have frequently lamented, since, that I ever left Northumberland and connections so importantly valuable as those I there enjoyed. But Divine Providence often works by means to us inscrutable, and furthers his own purposes most when our own wishes seem least consulted. The winter having passed away and April arrived, I made preparation to leave the town, but had much difficulty to leave my revered friends, and especially Mr. Joseph Priestley, who made use of every motive to induce my continuance that his generous mind could suggest. My plan was formed, and my resolution fixed. I accordingly settled my accounts with him, and engaged my passage with a boat-master to Middletown, 64 miles from Northumberland. The precise day of our departure I do not recollect, but at ten o'clock at night we took our leave of the servants, who wept at our separation, and, with many of the kind inhabitants,

attended us to the water-side, and bade us an affectionate and long farewell.

I have now brought my account of Dr. Priestley's residence to a close; not that the subject is exhausted, or the character of the Doctor fully unfolded. To the lot of some more able writer than myself, I trust it will fall to develop his moral worth, and shew the world that not only as a philosopher but as a theologian, he will deserve to be ranked with the best and greatest men that have adorned this country. If this simple and unadorned narrative has produced any instruction to one individual of your readers, I am repaid; but if it has tended in any degree to soften the animosity, or abate the prejudice, of any of the enemies of Dr. Priestley, I shall have abundant reason to praise the good providence of God, that he has removed me to a situation in which I can do something to defend innocence, and justify a worthy character from malignant blame.

I am, dear Sir, your's, sincerely,

Melbourn, Nov. 23, 1806.

WM. BAKEWELL.

MISCELLANEOUS COMMUNICATIONS.

LETTER TO A DISSENTER.

To Mr. ———, an opulent Dissenter, on his Intention to educate his eldest Son for the Pulpit in the Church of England,

SIR,

IT may appear impertinent, if I address you on a design, which, report says, you entertain, of sending your eldest son to one of our Universities, with a view to his entering into holy orders in our Established Church. I must bow to the censure, for I cannot justify my freedom on the plea of acquaintance and friendship; and as to the young gentleman himself, the writer of this had only once or twice a transient interview with him; which, however, left impressions in his favour, and has created an interest in his future destiny. Besides, as even sensible and judicious persons do not always take a full and extensive view of a subject, there may be considerations connected with the design ascribed to you, which have escaped your attention, but which may carry great weight with them. Excuse then, Sir, the liberty taken in the present instance, of submitting some reflections, suggested by it, to your judgment.

You will recollect, Sir, that your son has been educated a Christian; that is, has been taught to receive his religion from

Jesus Christ. You are now about to send him to a place where he is to receive it from man, and to subscribe not to what Christ has taught, but to what human authority has enjoined, and on this ground, that the church enacts it.

He must enter into holy orders with prevarication, declaring himself moved by the Holy Spirit, but really and *bona fide* moved by a parent's request and the purchase of a living for him.

He must be inducted in the practice of prevarication, declaring an unfeigned assent and consent to principles which he has never studied, most probably ; and being thirty-nine general points, besides numerous prayers, collects, and sentences scattered through the Common Prayer, it can scarcely be presumed he can possibly believe all and each of them.

His ministry must be continued and carried on by repeated acts of prevarication, in reading, as devotional exercises, forms at which conscience will revolt—forms founded, in his own opinion, on principles contrary to pure Christianity—on the worship of three Gods, instead of one God the Father.

The matter, it may be concluded, has not appeared to you in this serious solemn point of view. Far from exposing a son to any influence that would corrupt his integrity, you would hold sacred, you would guard and protect the simplicity and sincerity of a youthful mind.

If your son should be qualified to support, and be inclined to assume, the character of a Dissenting minister, he would appear in the world with more weight and dignity, than he could derive from joining the clerical order in the Establishment : there he would be lost in the crowd, as is every rich Dissenter who goes over to the Church : he loses much in point of real credit and respectability, for his conduct incurs the suspicion and censure of being a desertion of principle.

It likewise deserves consideration, that the sum laid out in the purchase of a living would form a genteel, handsome part of a permanent fortune ; whereas the intended application of it will secure a life estate only.

Requesting your permission to refer these hints to your second and mature thoughts,

I am, Sir, respectfully, your's,

INTEGRITAS.

N. B.—This letter was not sent to the gentleman to whom it was meant to address it. By appearing in this Repository, it may probably fall in the way of others whose secret purposes it may meet.

ON KNEELING IN PUBLIC WORSHIP.

To the Editor of the Monthly Repository.

SIR,

HAVING been hitherto disappointed in repeated endeavours to obtain some satisfactory information on a subject, which, however unimportant it may appear to many people, is, in my humble opinion, of very material consequence; particularly to young persons, who certainly ought to be warned against suffering themselves to be influenced, in the performance of any religious act (as well as in their faith and common practice), merely by example of habits in others—formed, perhaps, from prejudices, originally founded on a too hasty and violent spirit of opposition—I now beg leave farther to make known my wishes, through the channel of your useful periodical publication, and to request the favour of having them gratified by any of your correspondents who may be able, and kindly willing, to inform me, from whence proceeded (or, rather, why yet is continued) that general custom amongst original Dissenters from the Established Church, of standing (minister and congregation) when they offer up, or approvingly join in public addresses to the Great Lord of heaven and earth? And why, likewise, their invariable sitting posture, in their “endeavours to worship” him, by singing psalms and hymns to his praise, &c.? By way of answer to the first of these queries, I was some years ago told by the son and son-in-law of two Dissenting ministers, that kneeling is a servile attitude. But I trust the number of those persons is small indeed who dare to think so highly of themselves as to deem the humblest posture we can use “servility,” when addressing petitions, &c. to our Creator and Almighty Benefactor! From another person, more recently applied to, (and who also, it was expected, must know if any worthy reason could be given), nothing more was gained, than a “supposition” that the customs alluded to had at first arisen from a too greatly extended prejudice against the society from which a separation was made, and had most probably been, in consequence, continued from generation to generation, out of respect to ancestors, &c. without farther consideration. Surely, however, in this enlightened age, and at a period, too, when many of those Dissenters, in particular, have, much to their honour, publicly discarded other strong and baneful prejudices in which they were educated, by forming societies for a more pure and rational worship of the One True God, none amongst them will be found acting from such unworthy influence only. A conjecture has sometimes occurred, that the habit of

standing at public prayer might be owing, in part, to the disuse of liturgies—a cause now happily removed in several dissenting congregations—and also to their ministers much-wondered-at use of long recitations of the Divine attributes, power, &c. in their prayers, though usually (and it should seem with more propriety) sufficiently recited, and the congregation duly reminded of them, in psalms and hymns, whether in prose or verse, and at which standing appears to be only that requisite respect to the Deity, the omission of which would be deemed often an unpardonable offence in inferiors to their superiors in rank, &c. amongst fellow-creatures, in their intercourse with each other, on comparatively very trifling occasions. But, be that as it may, such recitals in prayer are always accompanied with supplications for pardon of sins, petitions for mercies, thanks for those received, &c.; and a kneeling posture at such parts, to avoid an improper frequent change, would not certainly be more unsuitable, than the less humble one appears to be, for a devout suppliant. It is true that the humility of the heart is alone acceptable to God; and whoever is possessed of that essential quality, of which that great and omniscient Being (with the suppliant) can only truly judge, though it be unattended with an effect which by others is experienced as an inevitable consequence of it, must feel that confidence “towards God” that an acquitted conscience will ever give. Such a person it would most assuredly be criminally impertinent in any fellow-creature to disturb or censure in the slightest degree, and for a difference of opinion as to mere forms, more especially. Yet it may be asked, whilst a due regard to the practice of our Saviour and his apostles is enjoined, as an example to be followed in most instances, why should it, in any particular, be to appearance so studiously rejected? For, in the only passages in the New Testament where their praying attitude is mentioned, it is, I believe, always a kneeling one; viz. by Luke, xxii. 41. Acts, xx. 36. and xxi. 6.; and whatever the degenerated Jews might do during our Lord’s ministry, or may now be their custom, it seems clear to me, from Psalm xcv. 6. and from c. vi. v. 10. of Daniel (who is there said to have “kneeled three times a day in prayer to God, as he did aforetime”), that it had been usual amongst the truly devout of that people, both in public and private, to address their Maker as supplicants in a kneeling (when not, according to the frequent Eastern custom, a prostrate) attitude. According to information received from some creditable inhabitants of Warrington, that respectable and much esteemed character, Dr. Enfield, saw this subject in the light it appears in to the writer of this letter, and so judged of it (as to the propriety, at least,

respecting a humble posture in a creature when addressing his Creator), as well as of the beneficial use of liturgies, for enabling the congregation to take a requisite share in the devotions paid to their God, with the minister, that he was induced to try his influence over the prejudices of his public auditors there (some time before he quitted that town), and so well succeeded with many, if not the major part of them, as to gain their consent for the introduction and use of proper books for the intended purpose, and also of hassocks, or matted forms, for the convenient kneeling of such as (not being prevented by infirmity, &c.) were willing to use them. By some persons, even of the Established Church, it has been urged as an excuse for not obeying their rubrick in that particular, "that kneeling, when out of observation, affords opportunity and temptation for indecent indolent lolling, &c. totally precluded by a standing attitude:" but, as a reply to this, it may surely be very fairly said and concluded, that to such unmeaning worshippers it can be of no sort of consequence what kind of attitude they use (as far as relates to themselves); for, whatever they may be desirous of "appearing to men," they can intend, at best and most, to be "hearers only." For my own part, I must think that the most serious attention is always in danger of being disturbed, in a standing posture, by many possible and frequently occurring circumstances. Those persons, however, who judge otherwise, have an undoubted right, and ought to act, in this and every other similar instance, to the satisfaction of their own minds; and it is humbly hoped, that no offence will be given, by the adoption of this mode of endeavouring to gain desirable information on a subject, in which, for reasons already alleged, and for some others, I find myself interested—or affront taken by any person, at the liberty used in accompanying the request made with some hints, remarks, &c. which, it is presumed, may secure from censure or observation those few that at any time may distinguish themselves by a singularity which nothing could induce them to do (in a place of public worship, more especially) but a requisite obedience to their own sentiments of religious reverence for the Deity, with other devotional incitements. But should you, Sir, judge this letter in any respect improper for publication (and, particularly, should you apprehend from it an unpardonable displeasure in any of your readers), you are quite at liberty to dispose of it in any other way of which you may think it only worthy. Fully conscious of being perfectly free from the smallest inclination to favour a regard to mere superstitious punctilios, as well as from every the least degree of pharisaical arrogance, I shall remain,

Sir, Your very humble servant,

Oct. 16, 1806.

A CHRISTIAN UNITARIAN.

ORIGIN OF CHRISTMAS.

To the Editor of the Monthly Repository.

SIR,

As you have occasionally inserted extracts from scarce and valuable books, among other articles, in your very useful Magazine, you will oblige me by affording room for the following extract from a sermon by the late celebrated Dr. Latham, containing an account of the probable origin of the festival called Christmas.

I am, Sir, your constant reader,

A CONSISTENT PROTESTANT.

Gotham, Notts, Dec. 25.

“ As the present season has been devoted to celebrate the nativity of Christ, it may perhaps gratify the curiosity of some persons to shew what light we have from antiquity for the origin of this institution. The churches of the East pretend to have received from the Apostle James the custom they retain of the 6th of January, in memory of the birth and baptism of Christ; whereas the Western Church has chosen the 25th of December. However, we have no account either of the one or the other before the fourth century. Chrysostom is the most ancient of the fathers who has distinctly mentioned it; and it is entertaining to observe what he has said, in a sermon delivered by him on Christmas day, when he was only a presbyter at Antioch. ‘ I have long desired,’ says he, ‘ to solemnize this day with so numerous an assembly, for it is not yet ten years since this day has been so clearly known; for it was communicated from the West a few years ago.’ He afterwards adds, ‘ I know that many dispute about the day, some maintaining that it is a late invention, others that it is an ancient one:’ and it is certain that in this very age of Chrysostom, the 6th of January was observed in France; but this devout father attempts to demonstrate the new opinion and practice to which he conformed. His first argument is the promptitude with which the feast has been established; but this can have little weight in it, if we consider the age. The second is, from the time of the enrolment, which must have been known at Rome; and since this appointment was received from the Christians of that city, it might be presumed they had some authority for it; not, he says, that he was ever there himself, nor does he cite any testimony from thence, but acted herein by implicit faith. Now it appears from the account they give of Pope Julius’s searching the archives, forty years before, that they never pretended to any other evidence than that of Josephus to another point, which is a mere forgery. However, Chrysostom was so far imposed upon by it as to rest the whole argument on the following reasoning: that Elizabeth was six months gone when Mary conceived; and that Zacharias was in the holy of holies on the Day of Atonement, the latter end of September, when the angel informed him that he should have a son. Now these six months would reach to Lady-day, upon which they would place the incarnation of Christ, and consequently his birth on the 25th of December. But facts destroy this whole system; for it is false that Zacharias was high-priest, or in the holy of holies: he was a common

priest, of the course of Abia. Again, the calculation itself is doubtful: St. Luke says Elizabeth hid herself five months; therefore, when it is added that the angel was sent to Mary in the sixth month, 'tis natural to understand the beginning of it, which would place the birth of Christ at the end of November, as Clem. Alex. is said to have fixed it.

“After all, there are two other systems which appear to give a much better solution of the whole, than any we can collect in this way from history. The first is that which supposeth the institution to be copied from the Jews. At this season the Jews celebrated the dedication of the Temple: the Christians, therefore, dedicated it to the temple of Christ's body. The date agrees with it perfectly. Antiochus, as appears from the book of Maccabees, profaned the holy place; and, three years after, precisely on the same day of the month, viz. the 25th of the ninth month (*Chislen*—our December), they purified it again. This was the feast mentioned, John x. 22. which he says was in the winter. Josephus calls it the Feast of Lights (*Antiq. xii. ii.*); and the Christians gave the same name to theirs, as they then commemorated the light which, coming into the world, enlightened every man.—The other hypothesis derives the institution from the heathens, from whom even the Papists are free to own that the Christians have taken many of their ceremonies and feasts; for example, from their *Pervigilia* and *Lectisternia* (*i. e.* their wakes and village-feasts) arose the anniversaries of the martyrs; from their *Febra*, the Purification, or Candlemas; and, again, from their *Theophanies* and *Epiphanies*, the feasts of this season. By the establishment of Julius Cæsar, the winter solstice, or shortest day, was fixed to the 25th of December; which the heathens made the nativity of the *Mithras*, or the sun, as it then began to return. Now the Christians applied the observation of the same time to the Sun of Righteousness; and expressions to this purpose occur in the works both of Ambrose and Chrysostom, written about the time they fixed the name of this day.

“What I have here suggested is further confirmed by the judicious discoveries of Sir Isaac Newton, which extend the same observation to all our saint-days; for he abundantly demonstrates that they are formed on the same plan*. The heathens, when the sun entered any of the twelve signs, kept it as a holy day; and if, in this view, we calculate how it would stand in the time of Julius Cæsar, when the calendar was made, we shall find what was the festival for every month, which the Church has only altered and christened since with the name of some saint. Now, as this was the dead time of the year, when the heathens

* Sir Isaac Newton's words are as follows—“The heathens were delighted with the festivals of their gods, and unwilling to part with those delights; therefore Gregory, to facilitate their conversion, instituted annual festivals to the saints and martyrs. Hence it came to pass, that, for exploding the festivals of the heathens, the principal festivals of the Christians succeeded in their room—as, the keeping of Christmas with ivy, feasting, play, and sports, in the room of the *Bacchanalia* and *Saturnalia*—the celebrating of May-day with flowers, in the room of the *Floralia*,” &c.—*Observations on Prophecy*, p. 204.

It is a custom yet, in many parts of England, to deck the houses, and even the churches, at Christmas, with ivy. Our climate will not allow the addition of vine-leaves; otherwise the emblems of Bacchus would be complete; nor would the usual festivities and intemperance of this season displease the former votaries of the jolly god. Whether the Gospel tolerates such conformities is another question: at least those who think so would do well to recollect what St. Paul says, 2 Cor. vi.—15, 16.

had their *Saturnalia*, and gave loose to recreation, the Christians honoured it with the name of their Saviour. Happy had it been if they had *sanctified* their joy, and not made him a minister of sin. However, it is plain there was no regard in these appointments to the real time of the year wherein the commemorated events happened; and indeed it is impossible there should, for there is no evidence that they know any thing of the kind.

“ Some learned men have attempted to discover the time of our Saviour’s birth in the way Pope Julius did. Having corrected his mistake, they begin with the conception of John, whose father was of the course of Abia, the eighth in David’s list, 1 Chron. xxiv.; and then calculating the revolution of the courses, to find when Zacharias must be in waiting, they conclude that the birth of Christ must have been the latter end of September. But there can be no certainty in this; for the classes were greatly altered afterwards, as may be seen by comparing the different lists in Chronicles and Nehemiah, where, particularly, the house of Abia, which was first the eighth after the captivity, is called the twelfth. Upon the whole, all that we can conclude with any probability from Scripture is, that our Lord was not born in the winter season. We are assured the shepherds were out in the night, guarding their flocks: now the Jews assure us, in the Talmud, that the flocks were not turned out into the deserts till after the Passover, and were taken home again before the rainy season—that is, our November. Now it was only when these flocks were at large upon the deserts or commons that they were guarded in the night by shepherds; for when they were brought near the villages, there was no occasion for such attendance. This, you see, must place the birth of Christ between our Easter and November, but gives no further satisfaction, though it demolishes the common tradition, which, indeed, did not commence till nearly five hundred years after our Saviour’s time. ’Tis true, there is a more ancient account which is less objectionable, and, if we pay any regard to tradition, hath the best claim. It is that of Clement. Alexand. one of the most learned fathers, who flourished about 200 years after Christ, and reports two opinions which then prevailed: the one placed the birth of Christ upon the 20th of April, the other on the 20th of May. The former hath its difficulties, because the flocks might not then be turned out; but no considerable objection arises against the latter, and he too seems to prefer it. His words are these—‘ Those who have most curiously or exactly proposed not only the year, but also the day, of the birth of our Saviour, have said that it happened in the 28th year of Augustus, and the 25th of Pachon.’ Now counting from the battle of Actium, after which Augustus reigned alone, the 28th year of his reign will be three years and four months before the vulgar æra; and if we follow the Egyptian calendar, which they observed at Alexandria, the 25th of Pachon answers to the 20th of May in our account.

“ This is the most we can learn from antiquity as to the birth of our Lord; from all which it appears that God, in his wise providence, seems to have concealed the birth of Christ, as He did the body of Moses, that it might not be abused to superstition. The nativity of our Saviour is, indeed, so transcendent a blessing to mankind, that the remembrance of it, and thanksgiving for it, should be habitual, and mingle with all our devotions: but if any abuse this season of the year to luxury and sensuality, and thus eat and drink not unto the Lord, but unto devils, whilst they pretend to honour Christ, they really offer him the greatest insult, and make him a minister of sin.”

GOGMAGOG'S STRICTURES ON BP. BURGESS'S "PRINCIPLES."

LETTER II.

"To make possession and *establishments* a test of truth, is the sure way to banish reason and inquiry out of society. If from particular and national societies, we extend the rule to the universal one of mankind, *what would become of Christianity itself*, if a majority or novelty must be the criterion of true and false? We should have nothing left but to join with Tindal, and maintain it to be 'as old as the Creation.'"—Dr. Middleton's Works, Vol. I. p. 391.

To the Editor of the Monthly Repository.

SIR,

MY former strictures upon the Right Reverend author of the "First Principles of Christian Knowledge," may perhaps have appeared to some of your good-natured readers uncharitably severe; for there is in well-disposed minds an amiable incredulity on the side of men's follies and vices; and he that is hardy enough to expose, and, as far as he can, to chastise them, not unfrequently incurs the imputation of censoriousness for his pains. If such be the light in which any of them have viewed my first letter, I shall now at least undeceive them, and set them right, and leave them wondering, not that I have taken the field against this daring ecclesiastic, but that some more able polemic has not torn in pieces his web of sophistry, and beaten down the fabric which he has attempted to raise of absurdity and intolerance. The Bishop shall draw his own picture, and greatly am I mistaken if the portrait do not excite in the minds of your friends a livelier disgust and indignation than my explanation of it. There is a species of physiognomy which it is impossible to caricature. A high-church zealot is a creature whose deformity is lessened by being exaggerated: this creature, Sir, the monstrous offspring of church and state alliances, is too commonly thought to be extinct. I shall shew you that individuals of the species still exist, and that, though their power is gone, their disposition is unchanged: the animal has lost his tusk and claws, but he retains his ferocity.

My quotations will excite, indeed, diversified sentiments, and relieving you occasionally from the serious feeling of indignation at the Bishop's persecuting spirit, will call up at times the lighter one, of wonder at his ignorance, or contempt of the futility of his arguments, or ridicule of his absurd pretensions.

In his catechetical "Introduction on the Duty of Conformity," the Bishop asks his pupil, "What were the persons called whom the apostles appointed to govern the church and administer its ordinances?" and immediately answers—"They were called Bishops, *Priests*, and *Deacons*;" and, lest the

catechumen should have recourse to his Testament to determine the truth of the answer, subjoins in a note—"The three orders and offices were distinct in the days of the apostles; their *titles were not* equally so; but the certainty of a fact may well supersede all dispute about a name." Now, I would ask, how is the existence of any office, or order of men to be ascertained in history but by their names and titles? If new names and titles are now invented, give us the original ones; if the three orders existed in fact, tell us why not in name also. Lay before us the denomination which they actually bear in the New Testament. The invention of new titles shews a want of old ones, and decides against the catechist. What sacred writer calls Christian teachers *priests*? They use the term, I acknowledge, and sometimes in a good sense, but oftener in a bad. Priests, in the vocabulary of the New Testament, are generally persecutors, enemies of truth and righteousness, persons *grieved that ignorant and unlearned men* (and such were some of the apostles) *taught the people*; they are pharisaic Jews, or superstitious pagans: when the word is applied to Christians, it is by a bold trope, and they are all called *priests unto God*, and consequently there can be no particular order of them. Had the Bishop been better read in the Acts of the Apostles, he would have seen that *deacons* were not "appointed by the apostles," but chosen by the church or congregation, and that they had no more to do with governing the church and administering ordinances than have our parish beadles.

A little further on, our Bishop teaches his scholar, that "an inward call and outward ordination to the ministry" are indispensably necessary. This *inward call* is insisted on in the office of ordination of priests and consecration of bishops, of the church of England, and must therefore at any rate be maintained; but it is curious enough that the ministers of that church commonly deride him who pretends to it as a fanatic. In order to get into the church, they swear stoutly that they are moved by the Holy Ghost; and when once they are fairly in it, they are ready to excommunicate the simple Christian who, taking the church at its word, waits for divine illumination, and acts as he is impelled by spiritual movings. This is as amusing a scene as that exhibited by an aspiring ecclesiastic, who, after having intrigued, and fawned, and laboured all his life to gain a bishopric, declares most fervently, when the mitre is about to be placed upon his head, *Nolo episcopari*, "You sha'n't make me a bishop." Having saved his orthodoxy by asserting the necessity of an *inward call*, the good Bishop thus proceeds: "Q. Is an inward call to the ministry sufficient without the outward ordination?"—A. "No." But why,

reader, do you imagine the author gives so plump a negative to the question? Hear him—"Aaron was called of God; but he was publicly ordained by Moses." The example of Moses and Aaron is, to be sure, an excellent model for the construction of a Christian church! But let the conduct of these two Jews be appealed to throughout, and not in partial instances, and it will suffice to point out a more liberal church-establishment than any which has been hitherto framed by ecclesiastical statesmen. I refer the Bishop to an anecdote told of the Jewish legislator, whom he seems unaccountably to mistake for the head of the Christian church, in which there appears a degree of liberality which a modern priest would reprobate as latitudinarianism. "And there ran a young man"—a member, probably, of a society for promoting church-union—"and told Moses, and said, Eldad and Medad"—two soldiers who had not been to receive ordination at "the tabernacle"—"do prophesy in the camp. And Joshua, the son of Nun, the servant of Moses, one of his young men"—a loyal, high-spirited officer—"answered and said, My lord, Moses, forbid them. And Moses said unto him, Enviest thou for my sake? Would God all the Lord's *people* were *prophets*, and that the Lord would put his Spirit upon them!" Ah! ye Christian ministers, who, trampling on the humility of Jesus, climb into "Moses' seat," how long will ye forget that even Moses is a pattern of meekness! "There is one that condemneth you, even Moses, in whom you trust." With regard to the "inward call," the Bishop further asks, "Who are now to judge whether the call be of God or not?" and answers—"The bishops of the church, who have public authority given unto them for this purpose"—by the scriptures, and from the one only Master of Christians? No,—"according to the *ancient usage of the church and the laws of the land*." We have before heard of the omnipotence of Parliament and the infallibility of the church: they are here invested with the power, indisputably divine, of communicating the attribute of omniscience, the capacity of searching men's hearts, and trying their reins!

Immediately after this follows a section which, in point of logical precision and strength of argument, may vie with any part of the writings of the most profound fathers or schoolmen*; a true Athanasian specimen of theological writing,

* "In school-divinity as able
As he that hight *irrefragable*,
A second *Thomas*, or, at once,
To name them all, another *Dunce* †.—HUDIBRAS.

† *Duns Scotus*.

paradoxical and incomprehensible. Before the reader peruses it, I beg leave to refer him to the first motto of my first letter.

"A true, a pure, and a legal church."

"Q. What is a true church?—A. That is a true church in which the word of God is preached, and the sacraments are *duly* administered by persons *rightly* ordained. Q. What is a pure church?—A. A pure church is that which is free from all doctrines and ordinances which are contrary to the Scriptures. Q. What is a legal church?—A. That is a legal church which is established by law. Q. Is every true church a pure church?—A. No: a church may be a true church, yet it is not a pure church, if it acknowledge any doctrines and ordinances which are contrary to the Scriptures. Q. Is every true church a legal church?—No: a church may be a true church, and yet it is not a legal church, if it be not established by law. Q. Is every legal church a true church?—No: a church may be established by law, and so be a legal church; but if the word of God is not preached in it, and the sacraments are not *duly* administered by persons *rightly* ordained, it is not a true church."

When you and your readers, Sir, have recovered from your astonishment, I will put the Bishop's catechetical doctrine, as far as I can guess at its meaning, into plain propositions, remarking only that it is "strange doctrine;" "though" (if in consistency with my former acknowledgment of the author being a scholar, I may apply to him the caustic language applied by the writer from whom I have borrowed the motto of this letter, to a similar Episcopal reasoner of his own time), "nothing is strange from such a bishop, who has just learning enough to make his want of sense only the more conspicuous."

1. A *true* church of Christ may acknowledge doctrines and ordinances *contrary to the Scriptures*. If the more unscriptural and antichristian doctrines and ordinances there are in a church, the truer it is (though the author has not said this), then the church of England may be proved to be (as it was gratefully denominated by a merry dean as he swept into his hands a heap of gold which had been paid down before him by some unlucky delinquents, who had been cited into a spiritual court); ONE OF THE BEST CONSTITUTED CHURCHES IN THE WORLD.

2. A *true* church may be accounted and treated as *illegal*, and, consequently, it is possible that the members of such a church may, in certain states, be put under disqualifications, and subjected to penalties for being *true Christians*. Thank God, Sir, that you and I do not belong to any one of those

political churches, from which, according to the Bishop's concession, *truth* may be *outlawed* *.

3. A church *established by law*, i. e. a *legal* church, may be a *false* church, which it must be if it is not *true*. Now, then, how is a man to act with regard to such a church? To continue in it, is dishonest: to leave it is to become a Dissenter. What if the church of England should be esteemed a church of this sort, and the Bishop, instead of reclaiming non-conformists, should cause churchmen to wander? He will not be the first who has argued for the church till he has convinced the world that no argument can support it.

The right reverend catechist, having thus satisfactorily explained how truth may be impure, and how truth and purity may be illegal, and of course justly punishable, goes on first to assert, then to prove, that the church of England, "the King's daughter, is all glorious within." She is a *true* church, "because the word of God is preached in her, and the sacraments are duly administered by persons rightly ordained:" she is also a *pure* church, "because she is free from all doctrines and ordinances which are contrary to the Scriptures:" she is also a *legal* church, "because she is established by law;" i. e. she is true because she is true, pure because she is pure, legal because she is legal. This is what logicians call arguing in a circle, and arguing, like walking, round and round, necessarily makes a man dizzy, with this only difference, that no man argues in a circle till he is too giddy to move in a right line of argumentation.

* Will you indulge an old man in telling a story connected with the memory of a friend, now no more, the witty and dreaded antagonist of religious bigots and oppressors, Robert Robinson, of Cambridge. A farmer in the neighbourhood of Cambridge, wishing to register his house for dissenting worship, went thither during one of the quarter-sessions, and applied to the Magistrates then sitting on the bench for that purpose. These gentlemen, mostly clergymen, finding that he had brought no requisition, and was extremely illiterate and bashful, bantered him on the subject of religion till he was glad to leave the court, his errand unaccomplished. In the street, he recollected that he had heard much of Mr. Robinson's scholarship and boldness, and he resolved, though a stranger, to apply to him for advice. He found him out, and told his story. Robinson drew up a proper requisition, directed him to sign it, and ordered him to hasten home, and get it signed by any two householders of his village whom he should first meet. He did so, and returned before the justices had left their seats. Robinson now took the paper, and presented it in person. The bench stared in confusion, first at him, then at one another; behaved with studied civility, and ordered the register to be instantly made out. As he was returning home, he was overtaken and accosted by one of the justices, who knowing and esteeming him, apologised for the behaviour of his brethren in the commission, and added that it was all owing to the instructions of the bishop of ———, who is, concluded he, "the devil of a man!"—"Thank God!" said Robinson, in one of his arch tones, and at the same moment parted from his civil companion—"Thank God, I am not a member of that church over which the devil is high priest!"

My letter, Sir, would swell into a pamphlet, if I animadverted on every strange or obnoxious passage, even in the catechetical introduction; otherwise I should bring the Bishop before you to prove that by a *heretic* the apostle Paul meant a Dissenter, &c.; that none but such as are in "the Catholic church" can be saved; and that Dissenters are not in the Catholic church, and are therefore sure of damnation; and to entertain you with his reasons for belonging to the church of England, which are, "*First*, because the church of England is a true church; and because the *law* enjoins an uniformity, &c. *Secondly*, because it is *established by law*," &c. &c. But not being able to do justice to the passages here referred to, I shall pass over them to notice a ridiculous inconsistency, into which the bishop, in his zeal for the church, has been betrayed. His book is an evidence of the number of the real Dissenters, and of his apprehension of their increase; and yet, in answer to the question—"Who deny the Church's power to decree rites and ceremonies, and her authority in controversies of faith?" he answers—"A few Dissenters from the church of England." "He affects to despise those whom he appears to dread. His anger exalts those whom his ridicule would vilify, and on those whom at one moment he derides as too contemptible for resentment, he at another confers a criminal eminence as too audacious for contempt. Their voice is now the importunate chink of the meagre, shrivelled insects of the hour, now the hollow murmur, ominous of convulsions and earthquakes, that are to lay the fabric of society in ruins*."

The three creeds, the Apostle's, the Nicene, and the Athanasian, "may be proved," says the eighth article of the church of England, "by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture." So thinks our Bishop, who musters a host of texts "to exemplify and prove" every tittle of the orthodox Catholic faith; with what degree of wisdom let the reader judge.

The Nicene creed calls the son of Mary, in the true tumid style of the East, "God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God." Now to prove that he is "God and *very* God," (as if he could be God, without being truly God), this champion of the church quotes John i. 1. and says, that it "contains a direct declaration of Christ's divinity, for it was so understood by Julian the Apostate, a much better judge of its meaning than our modern Socinians." Not content, however, with making the Pagan emperor give law to the Christian

* Mackintosh's "*Vindiciæ Gallicæ*," p. 297. It ought, in justice to Sir James Mackintosh, to be mentioned that he has been convinced of the errors of the *Vindiciæ Gallicæ*, by the argument which was so potent in Hudibras's days.

"What makes all doctrines plain and clear," &c. &c.

church in this point, he goes on to appeal to the charge brought against Jesus, by the unbelieving Jews, his enemies. "He said that God was his father, making himself equal with God," (John v. 18), "that is," says our expositor, "God of God, because the Son of God." I congratulate the Bishop, Sir, upon his infidel allies: with such a cause in hand, he is not to be severely blamed for pressing into his service avowed calumniators and false witnesses. In the next edition of his book, I expect to find the mysteries of the church confirmed by the decisions and scriptural expositions of another infidel, who has, together with all his associates and disciples, as rank a hatred to rational religion as the Bishop, and whom therefore he may hug to his bosom as cordially as the apostate Julian and the perjured Jews: I mean, the notorious author of the "Age of Reason:" a book from which a good churchman, like our author, might derive many lessons on the sublime incomprehensibleness of Christian mysteries, the danger and wickedness of exercising carnal reason in matters of religion, and the binding indispensable necessity of implicit faith in the church, and entire confidence in the church's keeper, the priest. Christ, according to the Nicene fathers, is, "Light of Light." The scripture-proof of this proposition is dexterously made by the Bishop a proof of Christ's divinity; for, says he, "Jesus said, *I am the Light of the World* (John viii. 12.) St. John says, *God is Light*." I have sometimes wondered that John Baptist's disciples never deified their master. Had I been a cotemporary with them, I could have helped them to a proof, as convincing as this of our author's, of his being not only God, but a great God. Take it as follows:—God is Light: Jesus called John a "burning and shining light:" it follows, therefore, that he was, in the Nicene style, "Light of Light, God of God, very God of very God!"

If the Bishop's *proofs* of the Nicene doctrine amused me, much more, Sir, did those which he advances in support of the Athanasian. The creed of St. Athanasius (honour to his memory!) is as easy to him as *Propria quæ maribus* to a boy at school, and as intelligible as *hocus pocus* to a conjurer. Every part of it he advocates, not excepting even the horrid damnatory clauses; and he endeavours to bring the sacred writers (honest and benevolent men! they little thought of being subpoenaed as witnesses in such a cause) to depose to this murderous manifesto, this atrocious libel on the character of the Father of all mankind. Sir, if I am ever in danger of losing my temper, it is when I think of this execrable string of absurdities and lies framed into instruments of cruelty. I have

heard it called a master-piece of policy, and in its effects it has been, I grant, as advantageous to the church as if it had been a long-studied device; but I have no doubt that it was composed originally in a frolic by a company of drunken priests, and issued into the world with a view to try the credulity of mankind; and that when it was found so serviceable in subduing the human mind, and raising the importance of Ecclesiastics, that which had been formed to raise a laugh was retained to serve as a perpetual source to the church of reverence and gain.

Without troubling you with the Bishop's explanation and defence of the Athanasian jargon, I shall merely give you his advertisement of its design. "The *first* (the *italics* are the Bishop's) and main object of the Athanasian creed is to assert *the unity of the Godhead!*" Who will henceforth reject this Unitarian symbol? "The *second* object is to maintain *the divinity of Jesus Christ*, against Cerinthians, Photinians, Socinians, and a species of Deists, who call themselves Unitarians"—A SPECIES OF DEISTS WHO CALL THEMSELVES UNITARIANS! headed by Sir Isaac Newton, Mr. Locke, Dr. Lardner, Dr. Jebb, Mr. Wakefield, and the present bishop of Llandaff, Bishop Burgess's brother and neighbour!! Oh, for another caliph Omar to commit the works of all these unbelievers to the flames! The Bishop talks of Deists: I, Sir, could point out a species of them, odious and criminal to the last degree, "who call themselves" Athanasians, who officiate as priests, or receive princely stipends as prelates in an Athanasian church, who stigmatize every conscientious Dissenter as a schismatic, and call down fire from heaven upon him, and raise, as far as they dare, a fire upon earth around him; and who, at the same time, laugh in their sleeves not only at the doctrine of the church, but at its religion, talk prophanely, drink, game, whore, and live, to use the common saying, as if there were neither God nor devil. These profligate wretches (and there may have been some such formerly, even in the see of St. David's) I will not call *Deists*; for that is a word which implies the existence of some degree of religion; but I am, at the same time, unable to apply to them any term which will adequately express their gross wickedness and daring impiety. They will not, I am pleased to reflect, be mistaken for Unitarians.

I had much more to say, but I fear I have kept on writing till I have tired your patience. I intended to have followed the author in his "Extracts from Canons, Acts of Parliament," &c. which forbid, threaten, and denounce penalties on dissent,

and to have made some remarks upon the efficacy of the instrument which he seems to long to use in the conversion of Dissenters, namely, "excommunication." I can do no more, however, than refer your readers who are desirous of understanding this subject to the tracts and pamphlets written by Archdeacon Blackburne, from which I remember I caught my first light on church matters. I have gone further, you see, than my guide. I always pitied the Archdeacon, who was convinced the Church of England was corrupt and antichristian, and yet from early prejudice could not make up his mind to leave it. His story reminds me of that of an old friend of mine, a native of an unhealthy part of Essex, who, though he was afflicted with a perpetual ague, in consequence of the humidity of the air in his neighbourhood, could never be prevailed on to quit it, and died a martyr to the love of his natal soil. But I am wandering. Story-telling, I am aware, is not argument. I never wrote so long a letter before. I have been drawn on imperceptibly by my subject. I hasten to conclude. You know enough, perhaps, of the Bishop's "Principles;" more, I am sure, than you expected to learn, and more almost than you can give credit to in any modern prelate. I myself have been used to such principles, and to such men as their author, all my life; and I have made it my constant endeavour (I am proud to say it,) for a great number of years, to humble the one and to explode the other. In prosecution of the same design, I have now taken up my pen against Bishop Burgess, and shall always be, as I always have been,

Your's to command,

London, Sept. 3, 1806.

GOGMAGOG.

WANT OF ZEAL IN UNITARIANS.

To the Editor of the Monthly Repository.

SIR,

MUCH has lately been said upon the popularity of Calvinism, and the opposite state of the Unitarian doctrine. It cannot be denied, that the causes which operate in favour of the former are neither few nor inconsiderable in their weight; but to account for the popularity of Calvinism is not, I conceive, sufficient to account for the unpopularity of Unitarianism. We must seek some other cause; and this cause, I think, will be discovered in that disinclination to zealous, active, and well-combined efforts, which is so strikingly characteristic of the Unitarians as a body. Almost the only thing that has been done by them is the institution of societies for diffusing the

knowledge of the Scriptures by the distribution of books. The Unitarians do not expect supernatural assistance: they do not believe that the Almighty will deviate from the general course of his providence, by dispensing with human means. To what, therefore, are they to look for the general diffusion and final establishment of their principles, but to their own exertions? I do not contend for ill-regulated, uncharitable zeal, or for that which is not founded upon enlightened and liberal knowledge. I am no advocate for the wild enthusiasm of the fanatic, or the dogmatical denunciation of the Athanasian: all I contend for is a steady, consistent, and strenuous exertion in behalf of the glorious cause of truth, without partaking either of the rude and vulgar cant of the one, or the damnatory and impudent asseverations of the other: but when I look around me and see what the Unitarians are about, I am astonished that, with the great and glorious truths of which they are in possession, they should in general be so little concerned for their promulgation; and, instead of inquiring why Unitarianism is not more generally believed and professed, I am rather at a loss to account for the progress which it has already made.

I will advert to one or two particulars, that what I have now said may not appear altogether groundless. The Unitarian Fund, if it meet with sufficient support, will, I have no doubt, do much towards a successful attainment of the object it has in view; but I know, that it is opposed by many whose names are well known, and who are held in high and deserved estimation among the Unitarians*. Their influence is great, and, if exercised, must be attended with injurious effects towards the institution above-mentioned. Their objection lies, I believe, principally against lay-preachers: they are apprehensive that many, if not most, of them will be as indiscriminate in their use of texts, as those among the Methodists; and that, instead of promoting the true knowledge of the Scriptures, they will only pervert and misapply passages, in order to suit their own purpose; and also, that they have great reason to fear, that the zeal with which they may be animated will be carried so far as to lead them to the continual discussion of their favourite subject, to the exclusion of those exhortations to unwearied perseverance in the exercise of virtuous principles and pious affections, which constitute so principal and essential a part of the duty of every minister of the gospel, and which are likely to have a more permanent effect upon the hearts and lives of Christians in general than the most just and comprehensive views

* We doubt the truth of this statement.—EDITOR.

of speculative truth which can possibly be presented to the human understanding. Now, Sir, all that appears to me necessary to render this objection of no weight, is the institution of a committee invested with proper powers, to determine the qualifications of those who offer themselves for this service.

But since there is such a cry for a learned ministry, how comes it that institutions for this purpose have been and are no better supported? Or, rather, how is it that at this very moment there is but one in the kingdom, and that not having a fund sufficient to support half a dozen students? The one lately at Exeter, under the direction of the much-lamented Mr. Kenrick (whose death is a great public loss, a loss to the cause of truth and virtue), never was able, during the space of five years, to support more than two at the farthest. I cannot even contemplate this without the strongest emotions, mingled with regret and disgust. It were an insult to our understandings to be told, that it would not be possible, with a very easy, nay the slightest exertion on the part of the Unitarians, to establish at least two very respectable academies, fully adequate to the support of a dozen students in each. There never was a more general want of ministers: many societies have been dissolved on this account, and others are likely to be dissolved, if something be not shortly done. On looking at the state of the Manchester college, now removed to York, we shall find the names of many wanting, who ought to have been the first and foremost in its support. It is but a poor excuse, indeed, for any one to allege, "that it is quite out of my sphere; if there were an institution of this kind nearer me, I would then give it my assistance, &c." If there be but one place of education for Unitarian ministers in the kingdom, that place ought to receive the support of every one (in that connection) capable of affording it any: this is so clear, that I wonder any person in his senses should think otherwise: for instance, I do not dispute the propriety of those in the West of England giving their preference to an academy in that part, rather than to one in the North; but when there is no longer any in the West, is it therefore a sufficient reason for them to withhold their assistance from that in the North? It would be just as reasonable for a man to maintain, that because he cannot do all the good he could *wish*, he is therefore under no obligation to do all the good he is *able*. The question is simply this: do those of the Unitarians who refrain from giving their support to an institution for the education of ministers among them, because it is in a distant part of the country from that in which they dwell—do they think,

I say, that they could render no assistance to mankind, and to the cause in particular, by supporting *that* institution, till they succeeded in establishing one that would be nearer them? If they think so, then I presume not to arraign their motives, or to think less of their attachment to the interests of truth and mankind; but are there any who will hazard so bold an assertion? If there are not, then is it manifest that the reason of there being no better provision for the education of ministers among the Unitarians, arises solely from their not being more hearty in the cause: and what justification can there be offered for those who, having it so easily in their power, omit to do good, and neglect to advance the cause of truth, of virtue, and of God? It is truly lamentable, and to serious, well-disposed, and considerate minds, it must often be the subject of their silent meditations, that so little regard should be paid to the interests of religion, while they behold so much zeal shewn for those things which are merely temporal. For the attainment of an object of comparative insignificance, we shall see men employing all their powers, and grudging no expense in its behalf; and yet, when they are called upon to promote the greatest and most weighty of all concerns, how indifferent and unmoved do they appear!

Wishing you every possible success in the publication of your valuable Repository, and more particularly that it may be the means of rousing into action that spirit which now appears to be almost in a state of torpor and apathy, I conclude for the present, by remaining your's, &c.

Yours,

T. M.

J. Madge

ON DISSENTING MINISTERS PLAYING AT CARDS.

To the Editor of the Monthly Repository.

SIR,

THERE are many who maintain that truth is but one; but, on the present occasion, I beg to state that it is twofold. It relates to practice as well as to faith: and now, Sir, it is a part of my creed, that it is as much our duty to publish and support truth in practice, as it is to publish and support it in articles of faith. From the liberal sentiments expressed by some of the recent defenders of Unitarianism, I was in hopes that this truth in practice was about to establish itself in all the parts of the Unitarian conduct. It was, therefore, with some surprise I read a long and well-written paper in your Miscellany for October, on card-playing. Allow me to observe to you that this custom, vile as it

is often represented, does not deserve all the opprobrium that is cast upon it, nor ought it to be deprived of the small advantages that follow in its train.

We have been told that cards were invented by an ingenious courtier, to amuse the vacant hours of a foolish king of France. Be it so. It matters little whence the origin is dated : it matters much more what is the tendency of any employment of our time. I am a dissenting minister, but have not all my lifetime been confined to the narrow circle of a country congregation. My observation of mankind has been a little wider ; and the whole of it leads me to believe that if truth in every form, and with relation to every object, were plainly stated and firmly supported, genuine religion, and that which best answers the true end of civilized society (which I firmly believe to be the case with unadulterated Christianity) would be better relished, and more widely spread than at present it is. Your correspondent, who signs himself P. Q. would not have a dissenting minister employ any of his time at the card-table ; and he argues upon this subject as unhappily most people do when they have a mind to cry down a practice that does not accord with their inclinations, or with the habits their education has led them to form. He argues from the abuse of the thing. Some people cannot play at cards, and would therefore fain prevent others from playing. Some have been taught to call them the devil's books, and of course to shun their company, as they would the company of their master. It appears they are of a much later date than is the palace of Pandemonium, according to Milton ; and though in some respects the court in which they originated has been deemed little better in point of morals than was the court of Satan, yet I trust Christian candour will not attribute to their unknown inventor a thousandth part of the misery of which they have been the cause : and, alas ! Sir, where is the book which contains any thing worth man's looking into, that has not occasioned evil enough in the world to make some men abuse and curse it ? Where is the employment which, when it has been undertaken by a mind fired with an evil disposition, has not occasioned anger, rage, and fury, war, devastation, and ruin ? Shall we exclude from this tremendous charge the most venerable, the most estimable of volumes ? We cannot : but nevertheless we hug it to our bosoms as the best treasure of man, and learn to ascribe the abuse of what might have been useful, of what on no consideration ought to have been injurious, to the hasty and violent passions of men, that are capable of converting a paradise into a hell.

But, says your Exeter friend, " is it worthy of your holy function to become the associate of the profane and worthless

at the card-table, &c.” What, Sir! do none but the profane and worthless frequent the card-table? To admit this would be illiberal indeed. What a pity it is, that when a man wishes to defend his cause, he should thus fly out of the track in which it evidently lies, and hawl frightful objects in to set down to his adversary’s account, in order that observers may be terrified at the sight of them! I presume that if a dissenting minister plays at cards, it will not be, nor need it be, with the worthless and profane, but perhaps with members of his own society who are not so terribly afraid of this methodistical scare-crow. I love not the terms “holy function.” It suited well with the Bramins, who would have the poor Indians believe that the divine knowledge was hidden in them. It suited well the Pharisees and Scribes, who, while they loaded the vulgar with burdens hard to be borne, would not touch them with one of their fingers. It is not amiss with our modern pharisees, who, both in ecclesiastical and civil matters, will preach “that the people have nothing to do with the laws but to obey them.” But, Sir, it suits not me, who am a dissenting teacher. I love to be considered as a man amongst men, chosen to advise because I am supposed to have a little more knowledge than the mass of my congregation: but I cannot bear that any degree of sanctity should be connected with my office; for if there is, I am sure there will soon be a degree of reverence attached to my person, and more or less of that blind submission and implicit faith which the *immaculate* representative of Christ in St. Peter’s chair has, till of late, persuaded the wide Christian world to admit of. I do not, therefore, like to affect any degree of sanctimony that every one of my society ought not also to exhibit. As truth, in respect of virtuous practice, can be but one, my congregation ought every one of them to be as virtuous as myself, nor am I required to be more virtuous than they. If then occasionally to frequent the card-table is not to be virtuous, the same law forbids both them and myself from sitting down to it. But if virtue be not offended by an innocent indulgence—if virtue permit the small gratification of “counting red and black spots on pieces of paper,” then are both they and I at liberty to join the social band, and thus to pass the social evening.

From time immemorial, there has been what is called “the parson’s game.” Even the parties that are the most rigid in their avoidance of conformity to the world, and those who have attached the highest degree of sanctity and veneration to the parson’s character, have thought it no harm that a dissenting minister should sit down to the backgammon-table, and spend an hour or two in rattling the dice: and where is the super-eminent

purity of these square pieces of ivory with black spots upon them, that they are to be privileged above the "paper with black and red spots?" The only difference I know between the two different methods of passing away an idle or an innocent hour is this: in backgammon, almost all depends upon chance, and therefore it is less worthy the attention of a thinking man; but at cards, and particularly at whist, a great deal depends on skill, and while a man is engaged in it, his rational faculties are on the stretch, and his mind accustomed and obliged to think.

Your correspondent's argument seems to avow that a dissenting minister cannot play at cards without coveting his neighbour's goods. I grant that he cannot be indifferent whether he win or lose; but really it is enough to make one laugh, when it is seriously argued, that a man playing two-penny or six-penny points (as high, I believe, as it is common for any except professed gamblers to play) is guilty of a breach of the tenth commandment. It is well known, Sir, that a man may play half the year without being the gainer or loser of a crown, provided his stake be regular, and his company usually the same; and that man is not a rational man, and therefore not fit to be the teacher of the Christian system, who suffers his feelings to be agitated by the loss of a sixpence.

Our attention is next arrested by a sudden address to the passions. "Prayer and the card-table—what an association!" No, Sir; they are not associated, I grant; and there are many other things in the life of a Christian, which it is intended he should engage in, which nevertheless are not properly associated with prayer. But we are not to be always praying, nor are they to be deemed unobservant of the Christian statutes who sometimes engage in an amusement which the Scriptures do not authorise by name.

In short, your correspondent argues throughout his piece upon the grand and palpable abuse of this species of social amusement. I would not have a minister of the gospel altogether a "Sunday man." I would not have him think nothing of his religion except when earning the wages of his office, and give into all the gaieties of life, and join all the dissolute company that meets to kill time: neither would I have him marked out as an object different from his fellows. If religion is once supposed to belong to the priest more than to the people, depend upon it the people will be ready enough to excuse themselves on the principle that they are not priests. We find that they do so, and that through this very means much evil has prevailed in the world. Let the minister intermix in the world as one destined equally with the rest to enjoy it. Let him

partake the innocent amusement of those whose situations will allow of their spending a part of their time in play. Let him on such occasions exhibit the conduct which virtue demands, and shew his friends how to shun the abuse of what need not be abused in order to produce its desired effect, and when not abused may serve to promote social harmony and innocent mirth.

I send you these observations, in the belief that you will not think me an enemy to true piety and rational religion, because I love not an ill-guided enthusiasm and a methodistical rant.

Your's, &c.

R. S. T.

ON DISSENTING MINISTERS PLAYING AT CARDS.

To the Editor of the Monthly Repository.

SIR,

I WAS somewhat surprised at perusing the letter signed P. Q. on the subject of dissenting ministers playing at cards, which appeared in the Repository for October. The general strain and tenor of it seems to me much better adapted for that farrago of bigotry and absurdity which appears monthly under the title of the Evangelical Magazine. I shall endeavour, in reply to P. Q. to offer a few observations on the subject in question. The matter under discussion is briefly this, as stated in P. Q.'s letter. "Is it consistent with the dignity of a dissenting minister to be a card-player, in his own house and among his neighbours? Is this practice likely to obstruct his usefulness, and to render him less qualified to fill the duties of his station?" In order to satisfy this question, the immorality of the practice of card-playing ought to be clearly defined and distinctly stated, and this would have been a sufficient argument not only for a minister's abstaining from it, but any other person whatever. But no: this does not suit P. Q.: he asserts, in a very triumphant and somewhat sarcastic manner, that "there is nothing in the precepts of the Gospel, nor the life of its founder, to *sanctify* this usage"—in other words, "the Gospel contains no rules for card-playing, neither do we find that Christ sanctified this usage by his own example." The absurdity of this method of appealing to the Scriptures for directions for the most trifling occurrences and practices of life cannot be too strongly exposed: it has contributed not a little to lessen the dignity and value of its ordinances in the eyes of the unthinking; and, as in the instance just quoted, it has served to blind or to distort the mental vision of many a sincere Christian. It is incumbent on P. Q. to shew positively and

indisputably that card-playing in itself is wrong and immoral ; that is, that it must inevitably tend to corrupt the heart and to vitiate the mind. When he has done this, I will join with him in opinion that it is wrong for a minister, as it would be wrong for any one else, ever to touch a card, since any practice which can be proved to be what I have just stated, cannot be sanctioned by that system of morals which is of all others the most pure. P. Q. seems to have formed his opinion of card-playing and card-players from the gaming-houses of St. James's, or the Macaroni of Newmarket, and he either is, or affects to be, ignorant of the difference between an assemblage of well-educated and well-bred people and a gang of professed sharpers and gamblers : he assumes, in the first place, that cards are the amusement only of the dissipated and the vicious, and then asks this absurd question—"Is it worthy of the holy function of a minister to become the associate of the prophane and worthless at the card-table, whose oaths and imprecations often eat as does a canker?" This real or pretended ignorance appears in every sentence that P. Q. writes, under cover of which he makes the broadest and most unqualified assertions, which indeed are so palpably absurd that they carry their own refutation with them. "The *very essence* of the temptation to sit at cards is the hope and wish of gain." This is true as far as it relates to professed gamesters ; but as it respects the generality of well-bred persons who play at cards, it is false. It is perfectly convenient for P. Q. to state the abuse of this amusement as the general and universal practice : it is also convenient for him to attribute to it motives and actions as universally and unavoidably proceeding from it, which obtain only among the vicious and the abandoned ; but let him not pretend to the title of a fair disputant or a candid reasoner.

"Prayer—the Bible—the card-table!" he exclaims, in a transport of pious indignation, without ever perceiving that the absurdity and impropriety of the combination arises solely from his own want of judgment. Try any the most rational and innocent amusement in the world in this way, and it must appear ridiculous, if not improper. But why couple things together which have no connection or correspondence with each other? Why join in the same line and sentence a trifling and in itself perfectly innocent amusement with that subject which ought never to be thought of but in moments the most serious?—"There is no concord," says P. Q. "between the prayer of the righteous man and the card-table?" If he means by this, that no righteous man either prays while he is amusing himself with cards or with any other recreation, or that while he is engaged in prayer he does not suffer his thoughts to be

disturbed by any of the trifling concerns of this world, he is perfectly correct; but if he means to assert that no righteous man ever plays cards, he says what is not true, and it remains for him to prove that it is so.

I would not be understood by any thing which I have written in this letter, to stand forward as the unqualified champion of all games of hazard: many of them are dangerous in any degree; all, when they are carried to excess. What I would be thought to mean is this; that cards in proper hands are productive of innocent amusement, and that if they are not improper for other persons, they cannot be improper for a dissenting minister. If P. Q. wishes to see this question completely set at rest, let him read a short pamphlet published by a Layman, in reply to a sermon of the Rev. G. Burder's, on the lawfulness of public amusements: he will there find those sentiments fully stated, which I have endeavoured to urge in the limited compass of a letter. I remain, with every wish for the success of the Repository, your's, &c.

Norwich, Nov. 12, 1806.

NO BIGOT.

REMARKS ON THE WRITINGS OF MR. EVANSTON.

To the Editor of the Monthly Repository.

SIR,

IN my last I presented to your readers a fair and impartial statement of Mr. Evanston's sentiments respecting the Christian sabbath and public worship; I now proceed to present them with his sentiments respecting the authenticity of the Christian Scriptures, as contained in the New Testament.

Your correspondent J. S. in his reply to my first letter, remarks as follows: "The second very extraordinary charge is, 'That Mr. Evanston has been long engaged in a project which lay near his heart, by an open attack on the whole of the Christian Scriptures, to set aside the belief of them in a manner much more becoming an open infidel than a professed Christian.'" J. S. adds—"That any one who has ever read the writings of Mr. Evanston could have been hardy enough to make this indecent, this unfounded accusation, would scarcely have been expected by any person acquainted with him or his writings;" after which follows the insinuation, noticed in my last, that in affirming I had read the first edition of Mr. Evanston's "Dissonance," I had been guilty of wilful falsehood*.

I beg leave, Sir, to remark, that a writer who takes such

* Monthly Repository for July, p. 363.

liberties with the character of another, as J. S. has, not only in the above paragraph but in other parts of his letter, taken with mine, ought to be cautious, lest he should, in so doing, have subjected himself to the very same charges he has advanced against his opponent. Although J. S. has professed to quote my language fairly, by placing it between inverted commas, he has been "hardy enough" grossly to misrepresent both my language and my meaning. What I said was, *verbatim et literatim*, as follows: "It appears to be a project which lay near the heart of Mr. Evanston, to set aside the belief not only of the inspiration, but of the authenticity of SEVERAL of the Gospels, and of those writings which Christians have universally deemed sacred*;" and when I afterwards mention Mr. Evanston as making an attack on the whole Christian Scriptures, from my immediately adducing in proof of my assertion "his publishing a book with the title, 'The Dissonance of the Four Gospels,'" and mentioning some parts of the New Testament he acknowledged to be authentic, it was evident to all your readers, not excepting J. S. himself, that by the word "scriptures" I meant "gospels." The cavil, therefore, at the incorrect use of a single word, which by no means obscured my meaning, the misrepresentation of my sentiments, and the "unfounded and indecent" attack on my veracity, might perhaps justify that language of severe reprehension which an honest man, feeling for his character, might on such an occasion be apt to use. But as a Christian should be cautious of returning "railing for railing," I shall make no further reply to this personal invective, but shall proceed to state the sentiments of Mr. Evanston on the subject in discussion, as they appear in the second edition of his "Dissonance," published a few months before his death.

In the New Testament of Mr. Evanston, I find three gospels out of the four—those of Matthew, Mark, and John—rejected as comprising a collection of "false, bare-faced fictions and fables, perversions of the Old Testament prophecies, which serve only to shew the ignorance and credulity of the writers!" With respect to the remaining gospel, that of Luke, the major part of it is admitted as authentic; at the same time it is declared to be "corrupted with sundry interpolations." So much for the Gospels. With respect to the Epistles; those addressed to the Romans, the Ephesians, the Colossians, the Philippians—to Titus—to Philemon (the latter "too insignificant" to merit much attention†!)"—and to the Hebrews: the Epistle of James, the First and Second Epistles of Peter, the Epistle of

* Monthly Repository for May, p. 247, 248.

† Dissonance, p. 320.

Jude, the three Epistles of John (the two last “too insignificant” to merit much attention*!)—fourteen out of the twenty-one — are rejected as spurious. The book of Revelations (the “unimportant, visionary, false Epistles to the Seven Churches of Asia†,” excepted) is admitted as authentic. Three fourths of the New Testament are thus rejected by this “best instructor of Christianity.”

My third charge adduced against Mr. Evanson was—“his rejection of some of the clearest evidences of Christianity—the miracles, the doctrines, the precepts, and the promises of our Saviour—and his limiting its evidence not merely to prophecy, but to *completed* prophecy.” J. S. instead of refuting this charge, enters into a detail of what he supposes Mr. Evanson himself believed on this subject; but the question is not concerning the degree of credit Mr. Evanson gave to these evidences, but whether he considered them as proofs of a divine revelation. J. S. however, for want of argument, again resorts to personal reflections. He adds—“What Mr. Evanson has said on the nature of evidence is so clear and distinct, that I should have thought no person who has read the ‘Dissonance’ could *undesignedly* have so greatly misstated it‡.” Let us then appeal to the “Dissonance,” to which I shall beg leave to add a quotation, on the same subject, from Mr. Evanson’s last publication—“Second Thoughts on the Trinity.”

In the preface to the first-mentioned work, after giving it as his opinion, that the evidence of a divine revelation arising from miracles is suspicious, the author adds—“God, by his prophets, both in the old and new covenant, hath given us another, an infallible criterion by which to distinguish the true from the false religion, and, as I have shewn in the following pages, refers us *solely* to the testimony of *completed prophecy*, which he would not have done, if any other had been necessary, or to be depended on with equal certainty and satisfaction of mind.” In the index of the work we are referred to a section entitled—“The *only* certain Evidence of the Truth of any divine Revelation,” which contains the following observations: “To all future ages [from the coming of Christ] prophecy, the completed prediction of events out of the power of human sagacity to foresee is the *only* supernatural testimony that can be alleged in proof of any revelation§. Completed prophecy is the only criterion given us by God himself, whereby we can ascertain the truth and divine authority of what is taught us for a revelation from him ||.” These quotations are sufficient

* Dissonance, p. 332.

† Monthly Repository for June, p. 363.

‡ Second Thoughts on the Trinity, p. 56.

† Ibid. p. 337, 338.

§ Dissonance, p. 22, 23.

to enable the reader to form a judgment who has designedly, or undesignedly, "so greatly misstated" Mr. Evanson's sentiments, *The Plain Christian*, or J. S. My last charge relative to Mr. Evanson was his "enthusiasm." The only answer from his panegyrist is, that "it is unfounded." The evidence, however, which I brought in support of the charge was so well founded*, that J. S. very prudently made no attempt to refute it.

J. S. towards the close of his letter, has given us a summary of Mr. Evanson's system of Christianity; and such an imperfect, mutilated, frigid account of the Christianity of the New Testament surely never was before, and I hope never will again be presented to the public. The sneers it contains against the peculiar doctrines of Revelation, the glories of which Intelligences of a superior order are represented as desiring to "bend down to contemplate†," so far from being worthy of a Christian or even of a modest sceptic, are only worthy of a confirmed infidel‡!

The reader will perceive that in the present controversy my design has been fairly and impartially to display Mr. Evanson's sentiments, rather than to refute them. My own opinion of the attack of Mr. Evanson on the Sacred Writings is in exact conformity with that of a late eminent prelate, Archbishop Newcome, as recorded in a late Repository—"I am glad that Dr. Priestley has replied to Mr. Evanson's 'Dissonances.' Much more remains to be said in a full confutation, but it appeared to me, that the objections had been all solved by the best expositors and harmonists §."

Were I inclined to enter on a more "full confutation," I should do little more than quote Mr. Evanson's opinions in his own language. I have, however, no wish to continue a controversy, which, probably, I should never have commenced but for the ill-judged and unfounded panegyrics passed on his writings by J. S. Should I, however, be called forth by the Evansonians, I am ready to produce such specimens, from Mr. Evanson's works, of inattention to the usual phraseology of Scripture and to the manners and customs of antiquity, of deep-rooted prejudices, contemptible cavils, childish conceits, and arrogant dogmatism, as would be disgraceful even to a novice in Christianity. Prudence, together with a respect to the memory of their oracle, will, I trust, prevent them from provoking farther discussion. It will be for their interest to let every thing be at rest relative to Mr. Evanson, except the

* Monthly Repository for May, p. 248, 249.
Doddridge in Loc.

† 1 Pet. i. 18. See
‡ Monthly Repository, for June, p. 365, 366.

§ M. R. for Oct. p. 519.

memory of his private virtues, some of which, and particularly his integrity in resigning his station in the established church, no one can more admire than myself.

I now close the subject by leaving it to your readers to determine how far the man who exerted his "best abilities" (to use his own language) to persuade the world that the observance of a Christian Sabbath and the assembling for public worship, were superstitious errors of a very pernicious tendency—who has attacked and ridiculed three-fourths of those Christian Scriptures which our Lockes, our Newtons, our Lardners, our Doddridges, have some of them proved to be, and all of them received as genuine—who pronounces our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, his description of the last judgment, as recorded by Matthew, and his valedictory address to his disciples previous to his crucifixion (not to mention other passages), from which millions of Christians in all ages have derived such an inexhaustible fund of instruction and consolation, to be spurious fictions—who rejects the miracles, the doctrines, the promises, and the precepts of our Saviour, as evidences of the truth of Christianity—who has risked its whole credit on the "cast of a die," that is, his own fallible interpretation of the most mysterious book of the New Testament, written in the most figurative language: I leave it to your readers to determine how far such a man deserves to be held up to the world as "one of the brightest ornaments and best instructors of Christianity, whose peculiar excellence consisted in his endeavouring to display Christianity in its native simplicity, by which it is as intelligible now to the poor and humble as it was when taught by Jesus and his apostles to the Jewish and Gentile multitude*." On the contrary, I beg leave to repeat the assertion, at the close of my first letter on this subject: "I am much mistaken if the great majority of your readers do not agree with me in opinion, that the writings of Mr. Evanson, in general, have a much greater tendency to promote the cause of scepticism and of infidelity than of genuine Christianity;" and concerning whom, when considering his character as a writer, we may justly adopt the language of our Saviour—"He that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."

Harlow, Dec. 1, 1806.

A PLAIN CHRISTIAN.

* Letter of J. S.—Monthly Repository for June—*passim*.

BIBLICAL CRITICISM.

COMMENTARY UPON ZECH. IX—X. I.

Designed to illustrate Matt. xxi. 4. From H. E. G. PAULUS*, Crit. Phil. and Hist. Com. on the N. T. Lübeck: 1801. Vol. III. p. 115, &c.†

It was necessary thus to exhibit, at full length, the context of the passage cited by Matthew as a parallel prophecy, because by that connection the original meaning must be determined. The whole passage does truly refer to the Messiah, in as much as the expectation of happier times for the Jewish people, under some king the vicegerent of Jehovah, may be said, under every different modification, to have reference to the Messiah. It has been observed by other authors, that the last chapters of what are called the oracles of Zechariah are an appendix to the original collection, and of much later date than the return from Babylon. (See “*Die Weissagungen, welche den Schriften des Proph. Zacharias beigegeben sind.*” Hamburg, 1784†; and Eichhorn, in the postscript to the 605th paragraph of his *Einl. ins. A. T.* 1787§.) The time at which the oracle in question was written, and to which it has reference, may be

* Lately Professor of Theology at Jena, but now at Wurzburg. A second edition of the first volume of his *Commentary* was published in 1804, with great additions and improvements.

† For Paulus’s original version of Zech. ix—x. i. see *Monthly Repository*, p. 197.

‡ The author of this piece was the Rev. B. Gilbert Flügge, of Hamburg. He opposed Eichhorn’s opinion that Zechariah was really the author of the last chapters of what are called his prophecies, and, it should seem from the manner in which Eichhorn notices the work in his subsequent editions, with considerable asperity.

§ In the first edition of his introduction, Eichhorn had given it as his opinion that the latter chapters of Zechariah were written by the prophet whose name they bear. In the second and third, he expresses his doubts about the soundness of his former conclusion, and thus states the reasons which had made him incline to the other side of the question—“I now incline to the opinion which denies the claim of Zechariah to these chapters, but without being able to come to a decision—without being able to say who is their real author—without asserting, that from the ninth chapter to the end discovers itself to be fragments by the same hand. The dissimilarity of the style from that of the former part still remains very great, after all the resemblances which have been adduced; and this, together with the nature of the contents, first made me hesitate. The whole composition is different; the colouring has another character, and the tints are combined in quite a different manner; nor can I clearly see, as I once did, the spirit of Zechariah in the connection of the whole, where the question depends less upon single words. The contents of this part, particularly, make me doubt whether it be Zechariah’s. Chap. ix. 1—8. appears to celebrate the victories of Alexander, so far as the Jews were gainers by them: can this oracle, then, be so ancient as Zechariah’s time? On the other hand, chap. ix. 9. x. 13. or the oracle concerning the happy æra of the Messiah, appears much older, and to have been composed before the separation of Israel from Judah (ix. 13. x. 6, 7.), and while the Assyrian empire was in existence (x. 10—12). With still less certainty can we speak of

accurately determined from Josephus's *Antiquities*. To the Maccabee brothers, celebrated in the first book of Maccabees, the sons of Mattathias succeeded the grandsons and remote descendants of that warlike priest. Of these John (Hyrcanus I.) the successor of Simon, was the most illustrious. The whole of Samaria, not excepting Sichem, was reduced by him, and the temple on Mount Garizim, so odious to the Jews, destroyed. *Ant.* xiii. 17, 18*, 450—453. (Hudson, 583—588.) Ephraim, *i. e.* the remnant of the Ten Tribes, might now be once more spoken of as united with Judah; exactly as we find it in the place quoted above from Zechariah (ver. 1. **וְכָל־שְׁבַט־יִשְׂרָאֵל**—**וְכָל־שְׁבַט־יִשְׂרָאֵל**). The Idumeans were compelled by Hyrcanus to be circumcised, or to unite themselves to the Jews, and acknowledge Jehovah. *Ant.* ubi sup. *Ἰρκανος, ἀπαντίας τῆς Ἰδουμαίας ὑποχειρίους ποιησάμενος, ἐπέτρεψεν αὐτοῖς μένειν ἐν τῇ χώρᾳ, εἰ περιέμνειν τε τὰ αἰδοῖα, καὶ τοῖς Ἰδδαίοις νομοῖς χρῆσθαι, θέλοιεν· οἱ δὲ ποθὼν τῆς πατρίδος γῆς, καὶ τὴν περίορμην καὶ τὴν ἀλλήν τινος διαίταν ὑπέμειναν τὴν αὐτὴν τοῖς Ἰδδαίοις ποιῆσαι. . . κακείνος αὐτοῖς χρόνος ὑπῆρχεν, ὥστε εἶναι τὸ λοιπὸν Ἰδδαίως.* This extension of the theocracy is thus alluded to (ver. 1. **כִּי לִיהְדָּה עֵין אֹם**, *sc.* **הִתָּה**)—After the theocratical dominion had been extended to the ancient inheritance of the tribes of Israel, and the remains of the posterity of Esau had been politically united to the descendants of a common ancestor, Abraham, the posterity of Jacob, men's hopes were naturally turned towards their immediate neighbours—the Arabian Hadracenes, the Damascenes, the Hamathenes, the Syrian and Sidonian Phoenicians, and the Philistines, who all lay about Palestine in a semicircle. Hyrcanus received from the Romans, under their guaranty, “Joppa and the sea-ports, Gazara and the springs, and all the towns which Antiochus had taken from the Jews.” *Antiq.* ubi sup. Under the phrase “all the towns” may be easily included all that are enumerated, *Zech.* ix. 1—6. Jonathan had already penetrated at one time as far as Hamath, *εἰς Ἀμαθίην χώραν* (**חמַת**) *1 Macc.* xii. 25. *Antiq.* xiii. 9. 442 [575]; and, at another, as far as Damascus and Nabathean Arabia. ubi sup. Simon had already subdued Ashdod; destroyed the temple of Dagon; taken possession of Ekron; received the toparchy of that town for Jonathan, and put a garrison in Askalon. *Antiq.* ubi supra,

the age of the Lamentation (xi. 1—3) for some great defeat, in which the commanders and the most valiant of the warriors were left on the field of battle, and the parable, or piece of poetry, which follows it (xi. 3—17). As little does the picture of the prevalence of the true religion, and of the impregnability of the city, carry decisive marks of its age (xii. 1.—xiii. 6.)

* The reader will observe that the references to the chapters correspond not with Hudson's divisions, but with the numbers in his outer margin.

viii. p. 442, 443 [575] 1 Maccab. x. 83—89. xi. 60. The governments of Ptolemais and Samaria had been granted to them (1 Macc. x. 38, 39. xi. 28. 34.), and, finally, Gaza itself, peopled with inhabitants who observed the Jewish law. 1 Macc. xiii. 48. Again, Hyrcanus I. held the three offices of King, High-priest, and Prophet of Jehovah. Ant. xiii. 18. 454 [588]. Ὑρκανὸς, βιωσας ευδαιμονως, και την αρχην διοικηταμενος τον αριστον τροπον, ετεσιν ἐνι και λ', τελευτα . . . τριων των μεγαλων αξιος ὑπο τη θεω κριθεις, αρχης τε εθνους, κ' της αρχιερατικης τιμης, κ' προφητειας. συνην γαρ αυτω το θειον, κ' την των μελλοντων προγνωσιν παρειχεν αυτω, τε ειδεναι. This eulogium shews the more clearly in what high estimation Hyrcanus was held, because it comes from a Pharisee, whose party he had oppressed, and countenanced the Sadducees. With what confidence must the Jews have expected the empire of the Saints, when, after the death of Antiochus Eusebes, he formally detached him from the Macedonians (γ') declared himself neutral and independent, and reigned in profound peace! Ant. xiii. 17. p. 451 [585]. (Αντιοχος δ Κυζικηνος, παραγενομενος εις Συριαν, πολλοις ετεσι προς αδελφον πολεμων διετελει. Ὑρκανος δε παντα εκεινον τον χρονον εν ειρηνη διηγε. Και γαρ αυτος, μετα την Αντιοχον—την Ευσεβην—τελευτην, των Μακεδονων απεστη, κ' ετε ως υπηκοος ουτε ως φιλος, αυτοις εδεν επι παρειχεν. Αλλ'—ην αυτω τα πραγματα εν επιδοσει πολλη κ' ακμη, κατα της Αλεξανδρου της Σαβιναυς καιρος, κ' μαλιστα επι τυτοις τοις αδελφοις. Ὁ γαρ προς αλληλους αυτοις πολεμος, σχολην Ὑρκανω, καρπεσθαι Ιουδαιαν επ' αδειας παρεσχεν, ὥς απειρον τι πλεονος χρηματων συναγαγειν.) The successors of Hyrcanus I. did not enjoy such profound repose; yet they maintained themselves prosperously in the territories which had been acquired. Aristobulus Philellen (who reigned one year), conquered a large part of Ituræa, so as to compel the inhabitants to receive Judaism and circumcision. Ant. xiii. 19. 455 [590]. Once for all, it is to be observed, that the Jews never conquered without endeavouring, at the same time, to introduce the theocracy, according to their ideas of it, into the country subdued. Timogenes and Strabo, quoted by Josephus, had remarked this circumstance, ubi sup. p. 456 [590]. Jannæus Alexander, the next son of Hyrcanus, who came to the throne, found Gaza and Ptolemais only, of the maritime towns, unconquered. Ant. xiii. 20. 456 [591]; and Gaza, which was then governed by five hundred senators (πενϋ γ'ϋν γ'κ) v. 5. was reduced by a strong force, Ant. xiii. 21. 459 [594, 595]; Amathion destroyed; and Moab and Gilead made tributaries, p. 460 [596]. Though, in the course of his reign of twenty-seven years, he was often unsuccessful against the Syrians and others, yet Josephus himself observes (xiii. 23), what fair prospects

the Jews had at that time before them. Κατα τον καιρον τετον ηδη (*already!*—he had something further in his view) των Ευρων κ̃ Ιδυμαιων κ̃ φοινικων πολεις ειχον οι Ισδαιοι. Προς Θαλασση μεν Στρατωνος πυργων, Απολλωνιαν, Ιοππην, Ιαμνειαν, Αζωτον, Γαζαν, Ανθηδονα, Ραφιαν, Ρινοκυραν, (the γ̃ ρ̃ α̃ towards the south-west, v. 10). Συ δε τη μεσογεια κατα τ̃ Ιδυμαιαν, Αδωρα κ̃ Μαρισσαν κ̃ Σαμαρειαν, Καρμελιον ορος κ̃ το Ιταβυριον. Σκυθοπολιν, Γαδαρα, Γαυλαντιδα Λευμα (probably Λιμνα * Is. xv. 2.) Οδωνας (ὀνιγπ Is. xv. 5.) Τελιδωνσ, Ζαρα, Κιλικιον Αυλωνα, Πελλαν (which last place, however, was destroyed, on its refusal to receive circumcision and Judaism) αλλας τε πολεις προσευσας της Συριας, αι ησαν κατεσραμμεναι. This ambition of extending the theocracy would be more cherished under Hyrcanus II. since he, by the advice of his politic father, returned to the opinions of the Pharisees. Ant. xiii 23. 463 [600]. The last expedition of this nature was undertaken by Aristobulus, brother of Hyrcanus II. against Damascus, at the instigation and under the conduct of their common mother, the masculine Alexandra. Ant. xiii. 24. 464 [601, 602]. She reigned nine years. After her death the Pharisees, under the government of the indolent Hyrcanus, opposed the ambitious Aristobulus with such confidence in their own strength as to demand from their powerful arbitrator, Pompey, a sacerdotal theocracy without a king. Ant. xiv. 5. 472 [611]. το εθνος, principally instigated by the Pharisees (Ant. p. 463) declared that these two εκ αξιεν βασιλευεσθαι πατριον γαρ ειναι τοις ιερευσι τε τι μωμενε παρ' αυτοις δεβ πειθαρχειν. ουτας δε τεττες (Hyrcanus and Aristobulus) απογονες των ιερεων, εις αλλην μεταγειν αρχην το εθνοςζητησαι, ὅπως κ̃ δελοι (themselves, kings, and the Jews, their subjects) γενοιντο. The disputes of the two brothers with each other and with the nation, about their ruler and their form of government, made them an easy conquest to Pompey, and thus began the decline of this short-lived independence of the Jews. Ant. xiv. 8. 475 [615.]

[To be concluded hereafter.]

DEFENCE OF "THOUGHTS ON BAPTISM."

To the Editor of the Monthly Repository.

SIR,

PERMIT me to request the insertion of a few observations, in answer to the very candid remarks of a brother "Seeker of Truth" upon the "Thoughts on Baptism," which you indulged with a place in your Repository for last June.

S. T. will be pleased to consider that I understand the word so improperly translated "teach," in Matt. xxviii. 19. as mean-

* There is nothing like Διμνα in Is. xv. 2. Perhaps it should be xv. 9. where Δειμων is found.

ing, not the giving instructions, but admitting persons into the number of professed disciples (or of such as were to be trained up to the knowledge and practice of Christianity as soon as they should be capable of it) by an outward rite. Instruction may inform, may convince, may produce a cordial assent to a truth proposed. But our Saviour required more than this. He insisted upon it that those who believed in him should acknowledge him "before men;" and it appears to me that the great reason for which he instituted baptism, and laid the stress upon it which he does in Mark xvi. 16. was, that, by submitting to it an open profession of faith in him was made. If so, then does it not follow, that, whatever persons might be in conviction and belief, they were not and could not be entered among the regular and openly-professed followers of Christ till they had submitted to it? So that, according to the very passage quoted by S. T. (John iv. 1.) they were made disciples as to conviction and belief by instruction, but were afterwards baptized for the purpose of an open public profession? And yet, after all, it appears, from Matth. xxviii. 20. that much remained to be done in the way of instruction after baptism; that is, that, after having openly acknowledged the authority of the Master, they were to be fully taught his sacred lessons. Now it is readily allowed, that the instruction, the knowledge by which faith was produced, supposes that the subjects of it were adults; and it cannot be denied that the first converts to Christianity were, and must have been adults; but then it is contended, that the command, "Enter on the list of disciples" (that is, by an external rite) sufficiently warrants the administration of baptism to infants. Wherever this is done, as an expression of the wish of parents that their child may be a real Christian as soon as it is capable of becoming such, and as a solemn engagement on their part to do whatever they are able that it may in fact become such; and in this view it is imagined, that the mention "of a book, of entering names in it, and of the engagements of parents," was by no means irrelevant to the matter in dispute. If the external rite admits into the number of professed disciples those in whom instruction has produced faith, it may, I think, be applied with equal propriety to those who are not indeed at present capable of either, if it be used as a token of the solemn engagement of parents to do their utmost that they may be trained up by instruction to faith and all the fruits of it as soon as they shall become capable of them. As to this part of the subject, then, I confess, I am not aware that the ground I have taken is not quite tenable. My reason for expressing myself upon it with diffidence was, that I know of no one who has publicly maintained the opinion I have espoused, and

therefore considered myself as having taken possession of ground not before occupied.

As to the other topic, I do not suppose that baptism was or could be administered as a symbol of being purged from old sins, if applied to infants who could not have committed sin, but merely when applied to persons newly converted from Judaism or heathenism to Christianity. S. T. most certainly knows that passages have been produced from early Christian writers, in which baptism appears to be called "Regeneration," (in allusion, it is supposed, to our Saviour's expressions in John iii. 3. 5. 7. which Dr. Benson, I think, interprets as referring to water-baptism); because hereby a person was introduced into a new situation, new relations, and new modes of life, and so was, figuratively, "new-born." And that it was actually considered as a symbol of being purged—not from original sin, which is a tenet that J. T. has long ago renounced, as well as the "Seeker of Truth," but—from the sins committed by the baptized in their former Jewish or Gentile state, appears to me to be suggested, not only in 2 Pet. i. 9. but also and still more plainly in Ananias's address to Saul, as given in Acts xxii. 16. "Arise, and be baptised, and wash away thy sins." That the substitution of "wash" for "baptise," in the passages quoted by S. T. (page 531) appears to him to be improper, I can ascribe only to his evident predilection for immersion. If the ear were once accustomed to it, perhaps being "washed unto Christ" would be thought more proper than "being immersed unto Christ." S. T. will permit me to ask, whether there may not be an allusion to water-baptism in 1 Cor. vi. 11. where "being washed" seems to be distinguished from the moral purification denoted by "being sanctified?" However, the hints dropt in regard to the mode of baptism were proposed merely as queries. The quantity of water to be used in administering the ordinance appears to me to be a matter of very little consequence, and such as ought to be regulated by the age, sex, or constitution of the person baptized, or by other circumstances of a like nature. I have only to observe, in reply to S. T.'s postscript, that we in this country think ourselves in general to be sufficiently cleansed if only the face and hands are well washed; that, as baptism is performed by those Christians who are called Baptists (especially in Wales, where, I am informed, it is the custom for persons to go into the water with their common clothes on, without any fear of suffering from it in their health) the addition of the ceremony suggested would not occasion the smallest indecency, and therefore that it could not have occasioned any if used by the three thousand mentioned in Acts ii. 41. After all, I must beg S. T.'s excuse, if I add,

that the particular mode of baptism is a circumstance which I regard as one of the very smallest matters in religion ; and that my most earnest wish is, that professing Christians may be united in fervent love to God, to Christ, to one another, and to universal holiness, without which no external ceremonies whatever will confer any thing more than a name ; being perfectly of the same mind with the late excellent Mr. Walker of Walpole, with whom it was a frequent saying, " that the best orthodoxy is orthopraxy."

With every good wish to the " Seeker of Truth," and to yourself, Mr. Editor, I am, Sir, your's,

Ealand, Dec. 6, 1806.

J. T.

REVIEW.

" STILL PLEAS'D TO PRAISE, YET NOT AFRAID TO BLAME."

POPE.

[Writers and Booksellers desirous of having their Publications noticed early in the Review of the MONTHLY REPOSITORY, are requested to send them, as soon as they appear, to the Editor, at the Printer's.]

ARTICLE I.

The Golden Centenary ; or, Sequel to the Sketch of the Denominations of the Christian World. By John Evans, A.M.
Third Edition, 12mo. 3s. 6d. Frontispiece. Symonds.

MR. EVANS is well known to the world as an advocate of peace and charity ; and at a time when there are so many patrons and partisans of bigotry and intolerance, his labours cannot be too highly valued, or too zealously encouraged. The reflection which a sensible person makes on surveying the denominations into which the Christian world is divided, is the necessity and importance of candour ; and this " Sequel to the Sketch" consists very properly of testimonies from divines of different communions in behalf of this amiable virtue.

To this edition are prefixed, " Two Essays ; the one on the right of private judgment in matters of religion, the other on the dignity and importance of the new commandment." An Appendix also is added, " containing pieces of poetry illustrative of the genius of Christianity." The frontispiece contains the heads of Tillotson, Clarke, and Jortin ; Watts, Doddridge, and Chandler ; Robertson and Blair. The plate is well executed.

We earnestly recommend this little volume to the younger part of our readers. Attentively read, it will have the twofold

advantage of instilling candour into their minds, and of inspiring them with a taste for the works of some of the best writers of the English language, and, what is of more value, of some of the ablest defenders of the Christian religion.

ARTICLE II.

The Fall of Eminent Men in critical Periods a National Calamity. A Sermon preached at the Gravel-Pit Meeting, Hackney, on Sunday, Sept. 21, 1806, on Occasion of the recent Death of the Right Hon. C. J. Fox. By Robert Aspland. Longman and Co. 1s.

THE death of Mr. Fox made so deep an impression upon the minds of the better part of our countrymen, that we wonder not at its serving as a topic of discourse for the pulpit. Mr. Aspland has justly considered it as a national calamity, and, connecting it with the death of so many great men within a short period, has interpreted it to be an event full of melancholy instruction.

Isaiah ii. 22. and iii. 1, 2, 3.—“Cease ye from man whose breath is in his nostrils, for wherein is he to be accounted of? For behold, the Lord, the Lord of Hosts doth take away from Jerusalem and from Judah, the stay and the staff, the whole stay of bread and the whole stay of water, the mighty man and the man of war, the judge and the prophet and the prudent and the antient, the captain of fifty and the honourable man and the counsellor, and the cunning artificer and the eloquent orator.” These words are applied, pertinently, we think, to our present national condition, of which it certainly “deepens the gloom, and augments the distress, that whilst dangers multiply around us, death has, time after time, extinguished those talents to which we looked for deliverance.” The discourse sketches the characters of Cornwallis, Nelson, and Pitt; and then proceeds to delineate that of Fox, who is introduced to the reader’s notice as “a wise, patriotic, liberal, and upright, as well as eloquent statesman.” The leading features only of this great man’s character are drawn, and such as, being in fact so many virtues, “are fit objects of contemplation to a Christian minister.”

“He was,” says Mr. A. “a zealous and steady friend to the liberties and happiness of the people: his ardour in the sacred cause of freedom never carried him, at the same time, beyond the limit of moderation. He was at all times the advocate, in the senate, of justice and humanity. He was on all occasions the steady promoter of peace.” On these topics the preacher

expatiates at some length. Having finished Mr. Fox's character, he adds, "We feel, and cannot but feel—we lament, and must deeply lament, his loss; but we do not feel or lament alone: all Europe sympathises with us! for there is not a civilized nation that did not confide in his integrity and revere his wisdom."

The mortality of man is painted in lively colours, and a lesson deduced from it of the vanity of human nature, and the nothingness of sublunary greatness. The following are Mr. A.'s practical reflections.

"In the *first* place, Let the consideration of the brief and fugitive nature of man, even when most powerful and most honoured, extinguish all our little animosities and contentions, springing from party spirit. Some political opinions and characters we must necessarily prefer to others; but why should our attachments straiten our benevolence, and expel from our bosoms the charities of nature? The leaders under whom we arrange ourselves, are, as we are, children of the dust, and will perish with us.—How still, now, are the two great rival statesmen, who so lately usurped our hearts, agitated our passions, and divided us from each other! 'They lie still and are quiet, they sleep and are at rest!'

"In the *second* place; Let the death of men of eminent talents and usefulness warn us, how easily and speedily a proud nation may be humbled, and reduced from the highest pitch of prosperity and power to the lowest degree of weakness and distress. The state of a community depends upon the character of its advisers and governors, and fluctuates as that changes. A few men, perhaps, a single man, in power, shall decide the fate of a country and of the world; whence it is, that power is so solemn a trust, and that it is of such momentous importance that it should be committed to the hands only of men of tried virtue and eminent talents. When governors are ———— what that great man was, whose loss (irreparable loss) we this day mourn, ———— when they are able and patriotic, they are, as the Prophet forcibly describes them, their country's 'stay and staff,' and when they fall, the nation which they supported declines and tends to ruin. Isaiah had predicted, with respect to Israel, that 'the lofty looks of man should be humbled, and the haughtiness of man should be bowed down,' and he delineates in the text the manner of this unhappy people's abasement; 'the Lord, the Lord of Hosts, doth take away from Jerusalem and from Judah, the stay and the staff, the whole stay of bread and the whole stay of water, the mighty man and the man of war, the judge and the prophet, and the prudent and the antient, the captain of fifty and the honourable man and the counsellor, and the cunning artificer and the eloquent orator.' All their men of wisdom and courage would, by one means or other, be removed; in the place of whom, as it follows immediately after, 'children would be their princes, and babes would rule over them.'

"In the *third* place; The death of eminently wise and philanthropic statesmen shews us the vanity of all those hopes of the melioration of mankind, which are built solely upon the capacities of human nature. Such men are prodigies. One of them scarcely rises up in a course of ages; and when such an one disappears, he leaves a chasm, which we despair, and justly, of seeing filled up. A second Alfred has

not appeared in the line of British, nor of European Princes, and long, in all probability, very long, will it be, ere there will be found in the roll of British statesmen, an equal to him whose loss afflicts us on the present occasion. The memory, indeed of these illustrious characters survives for the instruction of posterity, but their virtue and their wisdom cannot be communicated to their successors; and when, after a long interval, men shall arise with equal talents and equal moral worth, they will have to act, in some measure, as if they were the first benefactors of their species,—they will have to combat anew difficulties which their distant predecessors have overcome—when they have reached their point of perfection they will fall—and the world will wait for ages for the re-appearance of similar excellence and greatness. The human race is perpetual, but the existence of minds in such a degree of perfection is occasional, rare, and wonderful.

“In the *last* place; The mortality and death of the greatest and the best of men, whilst it serves to draw off our confidence from human nature, in its present frail and imperfect state, naturally inspires us with the hope and desire of immortality. As we follow the ashes of a great and good man to his sepulchral home, who can forbear thus to inquire—thus to reason: ‘Is so much talent extinguished, never to be relighted? so much knowledge buried, never to be recovered? so much virtue sunk, never to rise again? The order of nature, the character of the God of nature forbids the melancholy sentiment. In a world, so harmonious and orderly as this, mental maturity cannot be the signal for decay, an approach to perfection cannot be a qualification for a tendency to destruction! As well might we conclude that, when summer yields to the empire of winter, it has abdicated all dominion over the earth for ever; or, that when the orb of day quits our hemisphere, he will never re-appear.’”

The sermon is published, we are told in the preface, by the unanimous request of the congregation which heard it; and “the design of its publication is to testify, on their part, their admiration of Mr. Fox’s character as a statesman, and their deep and poignant regret at his loss.”

O B I T U A R Y.

At Richmond in Surrey, on the 26th ult. in the 55th year of his age, the Rev. THOMAS WAKEFIELD, B.A. thirty years minister of that Parish, elder brother of the late Rev. Gilbert Wakefield, with whom he maintained a uniform and reciprocal attachment. The sufferings of that excellent man under a political persecution, which will render Pitt an illustrious name among apostate reformers, he deeply regretted and tenderly alleviated. To his memory he erected a mural monument in the church of Richmond on which he has recorded his brother’s ill-requited virtues, and his own fraternal affection. To the surviving family he proved himself a second father.

Mr. Thomas Wakefield was, we believe, originally designed for trade, yet he very soon exchanged the counting house for the University. That he was not a mere loungee in his college his conversation, as well as his public discourses, sufficiently testified, though he was free from the slightest affectation of literary attainments. On the extent to which in his riper years he approved or rejected the doctrines of that church, to whose ritual he allowed himself to conform, we are unable to decide. As to that “full reliance on the all-sufficient merits of a crucified Redeemer,” which has been ascribed to him in an eloquent eulogium, we are persuaded that, in his mind, it must have been some-

thing very different from the vulgar notions of imputed righteousness and vicarious atonement. This at least is certain, that during the intercourse of life and in the expectation of death he appeared to experience nothing of that vacillation between hope and fear, rapture and despondency, by which Orthodoxy can hardly fail to perplex her consistent votaries.

Whatever were the theological sentiments of Mr. Thomas Wakefield, his practical Christianity was apparent to all who had the happiness of his acquaintance. He was indeed an eminent follower of him "who went about doing good." In the eulogium to which we have already referred, and which we understand to have been written by a Clergyman, one of his intimate friends, his character is thus ably and justly delineated.

With gentle and conciliating manners he united a manly and undeviating sincerity. Universal benevolence was not only the leading character of his moral system, but the confirmed habit of his life: it was rooted and entwined in every fibre of his heart. His abundant bounties were neither ostentatiously displayed, nor studiously concealed: and supported by means, moderate in themselves, but augmented by a prudent economy in his personal expenditure, they were carried to an extent, which, even in opulence, has been rarely surpassed. When consulted by his parishioners, whether in cases of temporal or spiritual perplexity, he never failed to approve himself a ready, able, and judicious adviser: and in the discharge of this critical office he was equally reluctant to wound the feelings of the meanest, or to flatter the errors of the highest.

In the fulfilment of his public duty his impressive and nervous admonitions were delivered with those clear indications of piety and zeal, with that earnest but simple and unaffected eloquence which they only who feel what they utter can uniformly command. But his invitations to virtue, and his reproof of vice, derived weight and authority from a still higher source. From the consciousness of his audience that he practised what he taught, and that his doctrines were but the transcript of his life, his precepts acquired a power of persuasion which, divested of that aid, no strength of language, no force of eloquence can ever hope to attain.

Though retired and studious in his private life he shrunk not from the call of any social duty. As a friend his cordiality knew no limits, his confidence no reserve, and it was almost peculiar to him that without profession, without adulation, without officiousness, his manner both expressed and excited the utmost warmth of attachment. His serious discourse was not less distinguished by the force of his remarks, than his moments of relaxation by a playful simplicity; yet neither did the former leave room for reprehension nor the latter for contempt. To the merit of others he was ever ready to bear the most candid and ample testimony: and superior to all sense of jealousy, wherever he imagined that he had discovered talents which might be useful to society, he was anxious to encourage them and bring them to light. From the same deep-rooted and extended philanthropy, which prompted him to cultivate with unremitting assiduity, the happiness of all within his immediate influence, may be deduced his frequent and fervent wishes for the peace, freedom, and prosperity of the world."

That the loss of such a person should be lamented in the neighbourhood where he had so long resided may be easily imagined. To the credit of his rich and noble parishioners, their fashionable parties and public amusements were suspended from the day of his death till after his funeral, which was followed by a numerous train of every rank. The needy regretted their benefactor. The opulent could not fail to revere the memory of a man who, with a dignified indifference to their pleasures and pursuits, had passed his life amidst the great and the gay, maintaining a conduct equally remote from the inattentions of a cynical moroseness and the mean compliances of a time-serving flattery. Contemplating such a character we are disposed to vary the sentiment with which Johnson concludes the life of Watts. We wish to "imitate" Mr. T. Wakefield "In all but his conformity—to copy his benevolence to man, and his reverence to God."

Rev. THOMAS TOWLE, B. D. a minister among the Independents, died at his house, Cripplegate, London, Dec. 2, aged 82 years. He was born in the city of London, and educated for the ministry under Dr. Marryatt. Possessing good natural abilities, he made con-

siderable proficiency in the common branches of learning. Whilst an occasional preacher in and about London, it is said that he was popular. He first settled as assistant to Mr. Goodwin, in Rope-makers-alley, Moorfields, on whose death he became sole pastor; but for many years had an assistant, preaching himself only in the afternoon. The morning preacher for some years was the Rev. Baxter Cole, the editor of Lardner's works, afterwards an assistant in a school at Peckham. The meeting in Rope-makers-alley being in an obscure situation, Mr. Towle prevailed upon his people to agree to the erection of a new one, in a more public and respectable place; and he devised the following scheme for defraying the expense, which was not approved by all his Independent brethren. It was customary in his, as well as in other congregations, to make an annual collection for the fund for relieving poor ministers of the Independent denomination. The money thus collected was laid by to accumulate with a view to the building of a new place of worship. After some time, Mr. T. was able to accomplish his purpose, and the new meeting-house was erected in London Wall—a neat and commodious building, in an open and yet not noisy situation. When he removed hither, he took the whole service upon himself, relying for a congregation, perhaps, upon the building and the place; but he soon found that the situation of a place of worship in London is nothing; the talents and manner of a preacher are every thing: for the number of his hearers greatly declined. Within these few years, the Rev. Mr. Barber's congregation (the lease of their meeting being out) proposed to join Mr. T.'s: the proposal was accepted, and both congregations united, formed a respectable society, under two pastors. But Mr. Towle was afflicted most severely with a constitutional disorder, the stone, which frequently prevented his going through his part of the public service, and rendered him very infirm. For the last year or two he was totally laid aside, and was for many months confined to his bed. He bore excessive pain with great patience. His mental faculties, however, were observed to decay, yet he did not choose to resign the pastoral office; his place was therefore supplied by occasional preachers. His diploma of B.D. Mr. Towle derived

from Scotland by means of — Walker, of Bethnal-green, who procured academical honours for a number of his brethren, and used often to joke with them upon the subject. Mr. T. was a strenuous defender of all the Calvinistic point, even the highest and most subtle of them: the writer of this article has seen a letter of his, in which he seriously maintains the *eternal generation* of the Son. He was no less rigid in his maintenance of all the minutiae of the Independent discipline; it was a maxim with him, never to admit any of different sentiments in his pulpit. He was zealous, even to bitterness, against the Baptists and Methodists. He was exceedingly fond of controversy, which he is said to have managed with great dexterity and acuteness. He was a great reader of modern theological publications, and would often make very shrewd remarks upon them; yet he published nothing, except a few funeral orations for ministers and ordination-services. As a preacher, he was methodical and systematic: his sermons sometimes seemed to consist only of a complex plan, without enlargement on any one idea—a skeleton without the clothing of illustration and ample argument. In a morning he expounded the Scriptures, and had gone through the whole of the Old Testament, and begun the New. His exposition was critical, but dry. He spoke extempore. In prayer he was reckoned to have a good gift—his prayers were usually long. Mr. T.'s zeal for the faith of the Geneva demagogue led him to support on various occasions subscription to articles of belief. He was the main opposer of an attempt which was once made to free the students of the Homerton Academy from subscription; and his opposition so far succeeded as to bind the pupils in that seminary to bondage, even to this day. He was also one of thirteen whose names were signed to a protest against application to Parliament for relief from subscription to the Thirty-Nine Articles, and was supposed to have a chief hand in drawing it up. His politics corresponded with his faith; he was always zealous on the side of Government. With all his severity, he was cheerful. His wit and humour will be remembered with pleasure, even by those that do not esteem his character. Some of his favourite stories will be long repeated. He possessed an ample fortune. He has left one son. He was for many years

a widower. His remains were interred on Wednesday the 10th, in Bunhill-fields. Among the pall-bearers were, the Rev. N. Jennings, the Rev. N. Hill, and the Rev. John Martin, who, it appears, was particularly intimate with him. The Rev. Mr. Kello, of Bethnal Green, delivered the address at the grave. A funeral discourse was preached on the Sunday following, by the Rev. Mr. Kingsbury, of Southampton. The discourse and the address at the grave are both intended for publication.

Nov. 15, in her eighteenth year, died ELIZABETH REBECCA VIDLER, daughter of William Vidler, pastor of the Unitarian congregation at Parliament Court Chapel, Artillery-street, Bishopsgate. Possessed naturally of a strong and vigorous mind, which had received considerable improvements from education, she seemed calculated for the comfort of the declining years of her parents, and for future usefulness in society; but the wisdom of Providence determined otherwise. Her acquaintance with English literature was extensive; she possessed also a competent knowledge of the French language; her taste for grammar, logic, and metaphysics was much beyond the promise of her age and sex; but her highest attainments were in Christian knowledge and virtue. The state of her health had been precarious for several years, and the last seven months of her life were decidedly marked by a pulmonary consumption, to which, at last, she became a victim. Firmly persuaded of the unerring wisdom and boundless goodness of the one only God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, she believed that all his dispensations were right. She suf-

fered, at different periods of her illness, extreme pain from spasms in the chest; but always discovered fortitude, patience, and resignation, which would have done credit even to an aged and well-experienced Christian. Perfectly reconciled to death herself, the six last weeks of her life were chiefly spent in reconciling her affectionate mother to the will of heaven: in doing which almost every argument which Christian philosophy could suggest, was used by her, and with happy success. Her last hours were very painful; but she retained both her senses and her patience to the last minute, and then willingly fell asleep in Christ, in hope of immortality, by a joyful resurrection from the dead.

Lately died, aged about 60, after a short illness, at the house of a friend, the Rev. HENRY MEAD, who for a few years past was afternoon preacher in one of the parish churches at Reading. He was formerly the minister of Ram's Chapel, in the parish of Hackney, and the first stated preacher in that place. He possessed good pulpit talents, and discovered much of the true spirit of Christianity. He ever cultivated harmony with the Dissenters, by whom he was much esteemed. Though he observed the orders of the Established Church, so as to preach nowhere else, he often occasionally attended the worship of his Dissenting brethren at Hackney and elsewhere, by whom his death is much regretted. Mrs. Mead, sister to the Rev. Mr. Cooper, a respectable clergyman, died some years before him, whose loss greatly depressed his spirits, as her piety and vivacity greatly contributed to his happiness. They left no family.

RELIGIOUS, LITERARY, AND POLITICO-RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCE.

ESSEX STREET.—We are happy to inform our readers, that a Sunday Evening Lecture, by Mr. Belsham, is established at the chapel in this place, to continue till the beginning of May 1807. Service to begin at half past six o'clock. This lecture will afford a good opportunity to persons confined, during the day, to other places of worship, and to strangers from the country, of hearing Unitarian preaching.

The Rev. CHRISTOPHER WYVILL has, we learn, resigned the living of Black Notley, in the county of Essex, from a principle of duty and conscience. His opinions do not oblige him to leave the church of England; and no one ought to blame him, therefore, for staying there; but he is an advocate of peace, charity, and a temperate reform.

The MISSIONARY SOCIETY have, with laudable promptitude, dispatched a

Missionary to the newly-conquered British settlement of Buenos Ayres, viz. the Rev. D. H. Creighton, one of the students under the care of the Rev. Mr. Bogue, who was ordained at Mr. Griffin's chapel, Portsea, on Friday, Oct. 3, and sailed from Portsmouth, in the ship Spring Grove, a few days after.

A present has just been received by the Missionary Society, through the hands of Dr. Haweis, of 500 l.

HIBERNIAN SOCIETY.—The Committee of this Society for reforming and Calvinising Ireland have just published their Report. They tell their constituents, that "in the extensive province of Connaught, only *two* ministers are reported as known to *preach the gospel*; and that in the counties of Waterford, Cork, Kerry, Limerick, Wexford, and Carlow, only *seven* persons are known to *preach the gospel*;" that is, we presume, the gospel of *John Calvin*, that "message of wrath and injustice, terror and despair." They say that it is unnecessary to circulate the Scriptures, &c. in the Irish language, as there are but few, if any, who can read Irish, who are unacquainted with the English language. They have sent Bibles, Testaments, and religious tracts, to the amount of 105 l. for immediate circulation; and spelling books, to be sold at a low price. They have employed an itinerant preacher, for two or three months, in the vicinity of Cork, and have voted sums to other zealous ministers for itinerating. They have formed a plan, which appears to us in the highest degree liberal and praiseworthy, for instituting schools in every parish in Ireland; in which, as it respects religious instruction, no tract or catechism of any religious sect or party is to be introduced, but the Holy Scriptures only. The following are the proposed means of supporting them:—1. The proprietors to furnish ground for houses and schoolmasters.—2. Houses to be built by the parishes.—3. Subscriptions by the inhabitants.—4. Money to be paid by scholars.—5. Amount of subscriptions, donations, and bequests. The Committee have been favoured with one voluntary offer of land for the above purpose.

UNITARIANISM in AMERICA.—A letter has been received by Dr. Toulmin from his friend Mr. Vanderkemp, formerly a Unitarian Baptist minister at Leyden, Holland (who was obliged to

emigrate from his native country, some years back, in consequence of his attachment to the principles of liberty), dated Oldenbarneveld, State of New-York, Aug. 1, 1806. In this letter, Mr. Vanderkemp acknowledges the receipt of a parcel of Unitarian tracts from Mr. and Mrs. Lindsey, which, he says, he has distributed among his neighbours, "with a success above his warmest expectations."—"Our congregation," says he, "is numerous; numbers flocking to hear our worthy minister (Mr. John Sherman, of whom an account is given in this volume of the *Repository*, p. 441), who is unweariedly employed in explaining the true gospel doctrine, and in promoting the kingdom of our Lord, by his example and by his instructions. He is remarkably plain in his discourses, delivers himself with eloquence, and preaches continually in the week, in the neighbourhood, in a circuit of twenty-five miles. Twenty-six members, male and female, have joined the Reformed Christian Church since its organization. Above 150 remain united with us, as members of the United Protestant Religious Society, and attend our meetings constantly. The situation of our minister is very critical and delicate—so many jarring sentiments to reconcile—so many prejudices to conquer—so many animosities to assuage! but I doubt not that, with God's assistance, he will prevail.—An inhabitant of your island, a Baptist, settled not long ago in the Jerseys, has addressed himself to our minister as a persecuted Unitarian, and sent him some of his performances, which I have perused with a great deal of satisfaction. His name is Edward Sharman, (This gentleman was, some few years ago, expelled from a Calvinist-Baptist church in Northamptonshire, on account of Unitarianism.) He follows, it seems, the farming business. He appears zealous to promote here the true gospel doctrines. Should our minister's labours prosper, he might be usefully employed in these environs."—Mr. Edward Sharman being a stranger to Mr. Vanderkemp, he prudently inquires into his "moral standing" in this country, a satisfactory account of which will, we have no doubt, be speedily transmitted to him. The issue will be, we fondly hope, that Mr. E. Sharman, and Mr. John Sherman will be fellow-workers in the cause of Christ.

POLITICO-RELIGIOUS.

IRISH CHURCH.—His Majesty, it is said, has commanded the Arch-bishops and bishops of Ireland, to make a minute return of the present state of the Irish Church within their respective provinces and dioceses. A dismal picture it will be! We hope it will excite his Majesty's compassion, and incline his ear to the arguments, hitherto ineffectual, of the necessity of granting the Catholics relief in matters of conscience: the only step, which will unite Catholics and Protestants as brethren, remove disaffection from the sister island, and render the single vulnerable part of the British Empire impregnable. Much better surely would it be to grant relief, while it is supplicated as a favour, than to wait till it shall be demanded, under circumstances which will make the demand irresistible, as a right.

GRIESBACH'S N. T.—We are happy to learn, that the second volume of this very valuable edition of the Greek Testament, published under the patronage of the Duke of Grafton, is arrived from Germany, and will be sold, at a reduced price, as was the first, to Ministers of every denomination. It exceeds, we understand, in bulk, the former volume by 150 pages.

Dr. TOULMIN.—The Sermon of Dr. Toulmin of Birmingham, preached in London on the 30th. of November, before the Subscribers to the Unitarian Fund, is in the press, and will be shortly published; to which will be annexed the Report of the proceedings of the Committee of the Society.—The same gentleman is engaged to prepare for the press a new edition of that scarce and useful tract, entitled "The Student and Pastor;" by the Rev. John Mason, M.A. the author of the celebrated Treatise on "Self Knowledge." To this edition, we hear it is intended to add, the author's "Essay on Elocution," "Letter to a Young Minister," with some notes and a short Essay on "Catechising," by the Editor.

Mr. MARSOM is printing a new edition of his valuable Tract on the "Impersonality of the Holy Ghost," which has contributed in no small degree to the spread of the Unitarian doctrine, and has lately found its way into the Unitarian Book Societies.—Its brevity and cheapness fit it for easy and extensive circulation.

The late Bp. HORSLEY had prepared a volume of Sermons for publication, which will appear in the course of the winter.

LITERARY.

Mr. BENNET, of Pythouse, in Wiltshire, is preparing to lay before the public, a number of original letters of Charles I. and his friends, which have been preserved in his family.

MUNGO PARK.—In addition to what was said concerning this enterprising traveller in our last number, we are happy to say that accounts have been recently received of him which mention his arrival at Tombuctoo, and that he is now on his return. It is to be feared that he will encounter great difficulties in his journey, as he has to row his boat all the way back against the stream. The journal that is sent to Europe is dated from Sansapang.

The late Mrs. Charlotte Smith having drawn up Memoirs of part of her Literary Life; the same, accompanied by a Collection of her Letters, will shortly be presented to the world by one of the members of her family.

The Seatonian prize at Cambridge is this year adjudged to the Rev. Charles Hoyle of Trinity College, for his poem on Paul and Barnabas at Lystra.

Mr. Coleridge is engaged by the managers of the Royal Institution, to read a course of lectures at that establishment, on the principles common to the fine arts.

Mr. Davies, of Lymington, is about to publish by subscription, a Selection of Dr. Grosvenor's Sermons, in one Volume, with a Preface, by Mr. Bogue.

POETRY.

TO THE REV. DR. TOULMIN,
On hearing his Discourse to the
Supporters of the Unitarian
Fund. Nov. 26, 1806.

FOR THE MONTHLY REPOSITORY.

While grateful mem'ry loves in thee
to trace
The kind instructor of my infant days;
Toulmin! I bless the Lord of life and
death,
That cares nor ills have quench'd my
vital breath;
But still, protected by his guardian
pow'r,
I share thy friendship in the social
hour;
Again I listen to the preacher's voice,
Who bade Religion be my early choice,
And taught the worth of Truth's cele-
stial lore,
By precept much, by fair example
more.
Truth, welcome guest from heav'n
to man below,
His light in darkness, and his bliss in
woe,
To view thy form the child of nature
sigh'd,
Just caught a transient glimpse, and
doubtful died;
O'er Judah's favour'd land for ages
known,
Through shadowy rites thy splendours
dimly shone,
Till heav'n prepar'd Messiah's won-
drous way,
And lo it dawn'd the long predicted
day!
Great day, the goal of faith's desiring
eyes,
That saw the Sun of Righteousness
arise,
The Jewish shades dispel'd, the pagan
night,
And they who sat in darkness, hail'd the
light
Prophet of Nazareth, to whom we
owe
What Nature, Science, Art, could ne'er
bestow,
Man's Sov'reign good, for which the
sage has thought,

The worldling labour'd, and the warrior
fought;
Yet lost in passion's storm or fancy's
maze,
To own their ignorance was their high-
est praise;
'Twas thine, blest Servant of our God
most high,
To teach us how to live and how to
die;
Thy life and death describes our duty
plain,
Thy rising tells how man shall live
again;
Yes, live, his Father's mercies e'er to
prove,
Though man be erring, yet his God is
love.
Such were the themes which held
enrapt of yore,
The favour'd tribes on Jordan's peopled
shore;
Such the glad sounds which at their
Lord's command
His follow'rs, joyful, bore to ev'ry land!
Bade Israel her long promis'd king
behold,
Of whom, through many an age, her
prophets told,
And rais'd the Pagan from his rites
abhorr'd;
To serve the one Supreme, and trust his
word.
Thus Truth prevail'd in heav'n's high-
favouring hour,
Nor ask'd the specious aid of mortal
pow'r,
And thus, her gold from human dross
refin'd,
Shall spread her empire o'er the willing
mind;
E'en now her dauntless champions dare
engage,
The Sceptic's ridicule, the Bigot's rage,
And, skill'd the depths of science to
explore,
Above all learning prize her sacred
lore.
Such late was Priestley, "that great
injur'd name,"
For this he own'd the generous hope of
fame;
Hail'd Truth's bright advent with his
"latest breath,"

nd felt his "ruling passion strong in
 death."
 Lamented Wakefield! such thy well-
 earn'd praise,
 Thou dear companion of my fairest
 days,
 To whose rich bounteous mind I grate-
 ful owe
 What kings nor ravage nor can e'er
 bestow.
 Thine too, yet spar'd to friendship,
 honour'd Sage,
 And yet, for us, may heav'n prolong
 thy age,
 To mark thee, Lindsey, calmly wait thy
 rest,
 And emulate a life whose end is blest.
 And see, the langours of thy couch to
 soothe,
 An ardent throng approach the fane
 of truth
 Devout before the eternal altar bend
 With various gifts to serve one pur-
 pos'd end;
 Her boundless reign, decreed ere nature's
 birth,
 For which her sire now shakes the
 trembling earth.
 Thou at whose pleasure the proud
 monarch reigns,
 Who nerves the victor or his wrath
 restrains;
 Whose word can bid the storm of na-
 ture cease
 And hush ambition's wilder storm to
 peace;
 O bring the halcyon days describ'd of old,
 By saints desir'd, by holy seers foretold,
 When peace and righteousness in one
 embrace;
 Shall join, howe'er dispers'd, the human
 race,
 Truth seek each continent's remotest
 bound,
 And farthest isles repeat the joyful
 sound;
 Beyond the scanty world the Grecian
 knew
 Where Rome's rapacious eagles never
 flew,
 Nor conquering Gallia roll'd her san-
 guine tide;
 Nor sea-girt Britain furl'd her naval
 pride,
 There justice walk with mercy in her
 train
 Beneath thy son Messiah's equal reign.
 J. T. R.

LINES

*Addressed to the Gentlemen who
 met at the King's Head Tavern,
 Poultry, London, 26 Nov. 1806,
 as Supporters of the Unitarian
 Fund.*

FOR THE MONTHLY REPOSITORY.

Friends of religion, friends to virtue's
 cause!
 Though not for you, the world resounds
 applause,
 Though on your schemes Ambition
 scorns to smile,
 And bigot fury may your lives revile;
 The world's proud honours wont your
 works debase,
 Where Virtue triumphs with celestial
 grace;
 Be your's the inward feelings of the
 heart,
 Where truth and worth their conscious
 charms impart;
 Be your's religion's sacred fires to feel,
 Whilst Charity controuls and guides your
 zeal;
 Be your's to teach her great, her
 heaven-born rules,
 The guide of wisdom, tho' the scoff of
 fools;
 Be your's her much-lov'd Lord's com-
 mands to spread,
 And o'er the earth his pitying love to
 shed.
 Then tho' no earthly honours wait your
 call,
 And tho' misfortunes should your hearts
 appal,
 Your pure religion would her aid impart,
 And heal with heav'nly balm the bleed-
 ing heart.
 'Twas thus your Priestley, 'mid each
 earthly stroke,
 Bore with unbroken strength the Chris-
 tian yoke,
 Drew his support from mild religion's
 springs,
 And rose divinely on triumphant wings;
 Learn'd, amid thorns, to cull celestial
 flowers,
 Whilst grace divine illum'd his latest
 hours!

Ouse Burn, near
 Newcastle.

M. R.

NEW PUBLICATIONS.

RELIGIOUS.

A New Testament, or the New Covenant according to Luke, Paul, and John; published in conformity to the Plan of the late Rev. Edw. Evanson. 8s.

A Discourse, occasioned by the Death of the Right Hon. C. J. Fox, delivered at the Unitarian Chapel in Essex-street, Oct. 12, 1806. By T. Belsham. 1s.

The French National Catechism. Translated from the Original, with an Introduction and Notes. By D. Bogue. 3s. 6d.

Discursory Considerations on the Supposed Evidence of the Early Fathers, that St. Matthew's Gospel was the first written. By a Country Clergyman. 3s.

POETICAL.

The Goodness of God. With Pious Meditations, and Advice to the Unmarried. By W. N. Hart. 8vo.

A Monody, occasioned by the Death of the Right Hon. C. J. Fox, with Notes Political and Biographical. 2s. 6d.

An Elegy on the Death of H. K. White, who died at St. John's College, Cambridge, Oct. 19, 1806. 1s.

MISCELLANEOUS.

Tracts, Historical and Philosophical; relative to the late Edinburgh Controversy, respecting the Election of Mr. Leslie. 2 vols. 13s. 6d.

Canine Gratitude; or, a Collection of Anecdotes, illustrative of the Faithful Attachment and Wonderful Sagacity of Dogs. By J. Taylor. 3s.

Dialogues, Letters, and Essays, on Various Subjects. By A. Fuller. 3s. 6d.

Third Report of the Society for the Suppression of Vice. Distributed gratuitously.

The Geographical Copy-Book, containing the Outlines of Countries, to be filled up by Junior Students of Geography. By the Rev. J. Goldsmith. 2 parts. 6s.

An Essay on the Elements, Accents, and Prosody of the English Language. By J. Odell, M. A. 3s. 6d.

Communications to the Board of Agriculture; on Subjects relative to the Husbandry and Internal Improvement of the Country. Vol. V. Part I. 18s.

CORRESPONDENCE.

Our readers will perceive that the present number contains one sheet extraordinary. We were unwilling that the Preface and Index should occupy the place of the usual contents of the Magazine.

A great number of communications have been received this month, and are under consideration. Some inconvenience having arisen from the acknowledgment of every Article sent to the Monthly Repository, the Editor thinks it right to inform his numerous correspondents that this practice will be henceforwards discontinued. He returns thanks to his friends for their valuable contributions, but begs leave, at the same time, to suggest to them that they must leave it entirely to his discretion, whether or not and at what time their pieces shall appear. Without such a discretionary power no Editor could carry on a Magazine for twelve months. If in the exercise of it the Editor of the Monthly Repository should sometimes disappoint the wishes of his correspondents, let them not attribute his conduct to inattention, much less to invidious partiality, but to mistake. He engages, however, not to be surprised or chagrined; should he, in some cases, be charged with an abuse of power.

L. C. On the Improved Version of the New Testament came too late for insertion this month, as did also Mr. Holland's Reply to Mr. Palmer, which agreeably to Mr. Holland's request has been put into Mr. Palmer's hands.

The First Volume of the Monthly Repository being now completed, may be had done up in boards, price 12s. 6d. of Messrs. Longman & Co. Paternoster Row, the future publishers of the Work, of whom may be had likewise odd numbers.

The reader is requested to correct with his pen the following Errata in the last number. In p. 592, line 21 from the top, for *puts* read *put*; and in p. 607, on the right hand column, line 7 from the top, for *21st* read *91st*.