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*On the Principle of Subscription to Human Formularies of Faith.*

“For creeds and systems, the children of ignorance and the nurslings of authority, are doomed to mortality, like the perishable authors of their being; whilst Truth and Reason, the emanations of God himself, without the props of human institutions, will continue unimpaired as his own eternity, when the earth and the heavens shall be no more.”

GILBERT WAKEFIELD.

[The substance of this Essay was delivered, a short time before the author's leaving Scotland, before the Literary and Commercial Society of the City of Glasgow, with the following introduction. (The circumstance is here mentioned as explanatory of some local allusions.) “I have judged this subject, confessedly of very deep interest in itself, to be strictly within the limits of the Literary and Commercial Society, on the ground that it is treated by Dr. Paley in one of his chapters on Moral Philosophy and Political Economy. It has a direct bearing, indeed, upon particular theology, but it may be discussed quite independently; and in this manner it is my intention to treat it. I shall endeavour to avoid all expressions which may reasonably give offence to those respectable members of this Society, whether clergymen or teachers, who have been called upon to make that *subscription* on which this Essay will animadvert. I shall not, I trust, be supposed capable of any reflection upon them, because I presume that the most conscientious reasons have satisfied their minds. The discussion which may follow the delivery of this Essay will relate, of course, to the general principle rather than to particular instances; and if I do not much mistake, this is a subject which involves in it considerations of very extensive influence upon the character of men, and the welfare of religion and literature among a people. I find the subject of subscription ably discussed by Mr. George Dyer, whose various elegant productions in general literature have thrown considerable lustre around his name; and who feelingly describes his sincere regret, “that the hand which now wrote against subscription had yet subscribed itself.” Mr. Dyer adopts the following division; viz. (1.) How far is subscription consistent with the natural rights of

mankind? (2.) How far is it consistent with the powers of the human mind? (3.) How far is it consistent with the principles of the British constitution? And, lastly, how far is it consistent with the doctrines and precepts of Christianity? This arrangement appears to me good; and yet my own observations, having been drawn up before I had examined that elaborate work, have assumed a different form, and I have, I think, touched lightly, if at all, the topic which is placed the third in this division.”]

THE idea of framing the several Protestant confessions which were made in the early part of the Reformation, originated, according to Archdeacon Blackburne, in the wild extravagancies, both of opinion and practice, into which some of the more illiterate of the Protestants must be admitted to have run. These circumstances were thought to lay the more orderly and moderate Protestants under a necessity of publishing an explicit confession of their faith and doctrine, authenticated by formal attestations of the leading members of their respective churches. That of the Protestant princes of Germany led the way, being solemnly tendered to the Emperor Charles V., in the diet held at Augsburg, in the year 1530. This precedent other Protestant states and churches thought fit to follow on different occasions, and by this means freed themselves from the appearance of countenancing the illiterate enthusiasts who were so active in promoting their ill-digested opinions. These confessions, being thus laid before the public with this formality, very soon became of more importance than just to serve a present turn. They were solemnly subscribed by the leading men of the several communions on whose behalf they were exhibited, as doctrines by which they would live or die; and were consequently to be defended at all events. And, therefore, to secure the reputation of their uniformity, an unfeigned assent to the

public confession, confirmed either by subscription or a solemn oath, became in most of the Protestant churches an indispensable condition of qualifying their pastors for the ministry; and, in some, of admitting lay-members to church communion.

But this expedient, intended to prevent division in particular societies, unhappily proved the means of embroiling different churches with one another to a very unedifying extent. The compilers of some of these confessions, in their zeal to stigmatize the heresies of the most obnoxious sectaries, had made use of terms which reprobated the doctrines of some of their orthodox brethren; the immediate consequence of which was, that several controversies which had arisen among the respective leaders of the Reformation at the beginning, and had been partly composed and partly suspended, in regard to their common interest, were now revived with much heat and bitterness. This led the Catholics to change their method of attack: and they readily took occasion not only to insult *the Reformed* for their want of unity, but to turn many doctrines to their own account, which particular men had advanced in conformity with their own confessions.

"To swear to the words of no master," is the translation of a Roman sentiment, which every man of independence of feeling must acknowledge to be congenial to his own mind; and which has, accordingly, in innumerable instances, been cited in reference to the various subjects of human thought and action. But there is one topic, above all others, that of Religion, to which this sentiment will apply in its full force; to which it is of the highest importance that it should be applied, from the application of which the highest benefits may be reasonably expected to result, and which can be shewn, by the most conclusive evidence, to be a bounden and indispensable duty. Our Saviour has expressed precisely the sentiment which, as indicative of liberal and manly feeling on general subjects of literature and human conduct, has ever excited the admiration of the cultivated and independent mind:

"Call no man father upon earth." (Matt. xxiii. 9.) The connexion, it is obvious, limits this command to the

serious topics of religion; and we find upon an examination of the passage, as illustrated by Jewish history, that our Saviour's words had reference to an existing controversy of that day. It appears to have been nearly coeval with our Lord's public preaching,\* that a schism occurred among the learned men of that nation, and that both parties, actuated by the principle of emulation, were disposed to raise the dignity and elevate the reputation of their respective adherents. Professing to be expounders of the written law, from which all their instructions ultimately derived their authority, yet such was the superstitious reverence with which these teachers were regarded, that in many respects *their dicta* were considered to be of equal, if not of superior, authority to the Sacred Volume itself. They had, we know, a number of traditional maxims, to which they attached the same importance as to the Divine commands, and which were often allowed to usurp the place of God's law, and to prevent its operation upon men's minds. The command of Christ, then, is most authoritative. The explanation must be sought for in the circumstances now alluded to, and the spirit of the prohibition may be thus expressed: Do not you, my disciples, although you may assume the office of teachers of religion, ever suffer yourselves, from vanity and the love of distinction, to receive that reverence for your opinions and instructions which belongs only to the great Head of the Church; or, taking the words to apply to Christians in general, as indeed a part of the sentence (Matt. xxiii. 10) clearly does; Surrender not to any man that right of private judgment to which you have an indisputable claim; be not swayed by the opinion or doctrine of the most distinguished earthly instructor, but recollect from whom you have all received the rudiments of religion, and who is appointed by the common Father as the Instructor, the Reformer, and the Saviour of mankind.—And it would have been well if the temperate, sagacious and authoritative suggestions of the Lord Jesus, had received their due measure of attention. For is it possible that, if this

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\* See Schleusner's Lex. in N. T. on the word *Πατρις*.

Christian duty had been constantly borne in mind by the teachers and the taught in the Christian church, we should have heard of the arrogant decisions and loud pretensions of successive councils of ecclesiastics, from a very early time? That we should have read of the gradual establishment of a most enormous antichristian power, under the pretence of securing uniformity of opinion, claiming the exclusive and the infallible right to decide in matters of doctrine, and to legislate in matters of discipline, for those whose only Master forbade such presumptuous interference? Or should we, after the measure of spiritual iniquity had been filled up, and several of the most enlightened nations of Europe had separated themselves from the connexion of the Pope—should we, if this precept of the Saviour had not been most deplorably forgotten, have beheld the Protestant leaders framing the creeds and articles for the observance of their followers, to which such extravagant deference has been paid in every succeeding period; which are still suffered to remain in their full force in the two Establishments of our island; and subscription to which—I will not compromise *truth* out of an affected and false regard for *charity*—subscription to which is required of candidates for the ministry, in preference to a declaration of belief in the Holy Scriptures?

To place the subject of this Essay in a more striking light, I will address, in imagination, some young persons hitherto occupied with the necessary elementary processes of education, which cannot be too carefully or exclusively attended to, before the endeavour is made to store the mind with that various collection of knowledge which human ingenuity and human labour have amassed in the field of theological literature. I will suppose that I am addressing some young persons whose early wishes have been fondly directed to the sacred duties of the Christian ministry, and whose time has been hitherto faithfully devoted to the necessary preparation. It is no hazardous conjecture that such may be ignorant of the facts which lie at the basis of my present reasonings, and I must be allowed to enter into detail on first principles. You are fond, I ardently cherish the

belief, of the perusal of the Holy Bible, especially of those simple narratives and moral and religious precepts which you can most easily understand. Your hearts, imbued with that excellent spirit which the Holy Scriptures breathe, are anticipating the period when it shall be your sacred and delighted employment to unfold to your fellow-creatures the treasures of wisdom and knowledge which they contain. You feel the powerful impulse which this anticipation gives to the most abstract and intricate studies to which your minds are directed, from a full reliance on the connexion which your instructors affirm to subsist between these introductory pursuits and the sublime end to which your thoughts, your wishes and your hopes are tending. While you peruse the monuments of Roman learning, you recollect the extent of the Roman influence and authority at the time that your venerated Master assumed the character of man's guide to immortality—you will be convinced of the value of even the minutest information respecting the history of that eventful period, to the knowledge of which, it is obvious, that few things can be more necessary than an intimate acquaintance with the language, and, by means of the language, with the institutions and policy and influence of the Roman government; but more particularly as you ascend the *ordinary* steps of education, to the elements of that highly polished, most copious, and truly noble language in which the Christian evangelists and apostles have transmitted to posterity the faithful record of "the wonderful works of God," you naturally feel your enthusiasm enkindled, in the immediate view of that most valuable employment which you expect to make of your acquisitions in the personal and critical perusal of the very sentences in which the sacred penmen have uttered "the word of life." You justly imagine that after having bestowed your utmost diligence in the acquisition of theological knowledge, and having attained to a strong and well-grounded conviction of the heavenly origin of that revelation which the Bible contains, you will be introduced at once to the character of a Christian teacher, in which capacity your highest powers and your best affections will find their



noblest and most delightful exercise. But stop—for which ever of the Established Churches of this kingdom you are destined, you are required, previous to your discharge of any part of the ministerial duty, (and in one of the English Universities, immediately on your entrance upon College, at an age when it is morally impossible that the generality of students can have made an accurate personal investigation,) to declare your unfeigned assent and consent to certain creeds, articles or confessions, drawn up in the infancy of the Protestant churches, by men just emerged from the dark night of Popery, designed to exhibit the state of their convictions concerning the truths of the Christian religion. It is scarcely to be expected, that the eminently conscientious and pious persons who were employed in framing them, and who deemed them calculated to subserve the purposes of Christian Reformation at that time, ever imagined that they would be treated with the superstitious reverence which is too generally attributed to them; nay, they would have been utterly astonished if they could have foreseen this in the nineteenth century, i. e. for more than two centuries and a half after their deaths; when the subject of religion in all its branches has been more fully discussed in every nation of Europe, the original languages of the Bible have continued to be cultivated with vigour, every conceivable inquiry has been made into Eastern manners and customs calculated to illustrate this volume; when the collision of numerous sects, during the whole of this interval, has compelled each party to examine critically the original records; when a progress, at that time unexpected, has been made in the collation of MSS., and the correction, upon principles of philosophical criticism, of the Received Text, so as to make it approach as near as we can almost ever expect to bring it, to the state of the apostolic autographs; and when (an observation which I hold to be inferior to none of the preceding) the general intellect of Europe has been carried to a vastly higher degree of culture; when art and science have received from human talent and industry their appropriate impulse; and when, in respect of the doctrines of Christi-

anity—nay, the truth of our most holy faith itself—the celebrated maxim, “to think what we will, and to speak what we think,” has here been completely realized. It would almost exceed belief, that at this auspicious period of the Christian Church, the candidates for the ministry in either of the Establishments of this country—and, with wonderful inconsistency, the same may be affirmed of the principal bodies of *Scottish Dissenters*—are required to profess unfeigned assent and consent, in the most solemn manner, to the very words which the wisdom of a Knox, a Cranmer, or a Ridley, teach;—when if the candidate, with all possible sincerity, intelligence and seriousness, declare his unfeigned belief in the Bible revelation, such a declaration is not to be considered as qualifying him to teach *the religion of the Bible* in these Churches. You must profess your Christian faith in the very words which were, without any such ill design, written by men as fallible as yourself, as weak as yourself, and whose opportunities of coming to the knowledge of pure Christian truth were greatly inferior to those which you yourself enjoy.

And here I shall bring together a number of *facts* connected with our subject, which it is important that we should bear in mind.

This method of requiring subscription to human creeds, as before observed, appears to have originated with the Protestants themselves. The very persons who often talk of the monstrous doctrine of the infallibility of the Pope, (or, according to the version of modern Catholics, the infallibility of the Church,) seem not to be aware of this; and the Protestant world do not sufficiently consider that a better provision is made in the Catholic Establishment for the gradual discovery of truth, in regard to the Scriptures. And it may be doubted whether a large part of the really learned and pious of the clergy of the Catholic communion, may not bear a close comparison with the generality of our Protestant clergy, in regard to the reasonableness of their doctrines, and the clearness of their views of the design of the Bible. There can be no doubt, at any rate, that at the era of the Reformation, one of the very first men for mental cultivation and en-



lightened Christian opinion was the celebrated Erasmus, who never separated himself from the Romish Church; and that in these respects, though not certainly for a manly avowal of his opinions, he was greatly superior to his contemporary and correspondent Luther. But,

So early as the time of Bishop Burnet, the question of subscription to human articles was very fully and rationally discussed; and this eminent person availed himself of his acquaintance with the clergy of Geneva, the cradle of the Reformation, to recommend a plan for the abolition of such subscription,\* which, to the honour of that body, was soon after carried into effect. And God hath rewarded this act of duty, by the present enlightened and rational state of Christianity at Geneva.

So long ago as the year 1719, the question of subscription was brought into discussion among the ministers of the Three Denominations of Dissenters in the city of London. Their debates related principally, indeed, to subscription to the Article which expresses the Trinity, but it is natural to suppose that many of the liberal men who voted on the side of free inquiry, must have been directed to the question of subscription itself.† These proceedings were the immediate result of the differences among the Presbyterians at Exeter, arising from the adoption of Arian sentiments by the very learned and justly celebrated Mr. James Peirce, of that city, the author of a *Vindication of the Dissenters*, a *Paraphrase upon the Epistle to the Hebrews*, &c. The whole force of the Dissenting Ministers in and about London was collected, and the discussion occurred in the place of worship known by the name of the *Salter's Hall*, of great interest and frequent mention in the history

\* See his *History of his Own Times*. This eminent prelate had in early life, during the short period of the establishment of Protestant Episcopacy in Scotland, been Professor of Theology in the University of Glasgow. An interesting account of his plan of teaching is given by Professor Jardine, in his "Outline" of Lectures.

† That this was the case, see Peirce's *Animadversions on the True Relation of Proceedings*, &c.

of English Dissent. The numbers of the subscribers and non-subscribers were nearly equal, but in the lively expression of Archdeacon Blackburne, "the Bible carried it by four." "This was the first Synod since the days of the apostles that decided in favour of liberty."

Several applications, on the part of the Universities, for relief in the matter of subscription, have been made to the supreme authority in the English nation. Several applications have been made to the University of Cambridge. The first grace for this purpose was proposed by the late Mr. Tyrwhitt, of Jesus' College, A. D. 1771; the last, by Mr. Edwards, in 1787: both were rejected by the Caput.\* In the years 1772 and 1773, the English Protestant Dissenters presented petitions to the House of Commons to be relieved from subscribing to any Articles of the Church.† At that time every Dissenting Minister was obliged to profess his belief of thirty-six Articles and a half. They have since been relieved from that oppression, and now profess their belief in the Scriptures only.

The year 1772 is also remarkable for an application to Parliament on the part of a very large proportion of the most learned and cultivated clergy of the Church of England for relief in the matter of subscription.‡

This application failed, and this failure was the immediate occasion of the determination of Theophilus Lindsey to leave the Church. He was followed by Jebb, Disney, Friend, Dyer, Hammond, Wakefield and others.§

\* Jebb's Works, Vol. I. p. 207, and Friend's *Thoughts on Subscription*, both referred to by Mr. Dyer, in his valuable "Inquiry into Subscription."

† See *Arcana, or the Principles of the Dissenting Petitioners*, by Mr. Robinson.

‡ It was on this occasion that the celebrated speech of Sir George Saville was delivered in the House of Commons. See *Belsham's Memoirs of Lindsey*.

§ *Robertson* had previously left his living in the Irish Church, and was resident at Wolverhampton. See the *Apology of Theophilus Lindsey*, (p. 196, 12mo.) who owns that "the example of that excellent person had been a secret reproach to him ever since he heard of it." The upright and noble spirit of these *confessors* has been recently finely exhibited by the Rev. S. C. Fripp.

whose talents and erudition might have thrown an increasing lustre around that Church, and saved her from the fanaticism of which her more sober sons complain, and by which some parts of the Church are nearly overrun.

As far as I know, the Church of Scotland, though she did exert herself in changing her Confession, (the one now in common use\* being not that which was drawn up by John Knox,) yet has made no vigorous attempt for the removal of subscription.† It remains the crying sin of both our national Churches, and I have no hesitation in affirming, that much of the infidelity and profligacy which pious men deplore is indirectly attributable to its continuance.

It reflects honour on the University of Cambridge, where, indeed, it was not till the 17th century that subscription upon taking degrees was imposed, to have attempted a reformation of this grievance. At the sister University no generous effort has yet been made for liberty. Even at matriculation, the young men still subscribe to the Thirty-nine Articles, and have not the shelter of a *bonâ fide* subscription.‡ By the Oxford Statutes, whoever go to be matriculated, if they have attained their 16th year, must subscribe the Thirty-nine Articles, take the Oath of Allegiance and Supremacy, and of Obedience to the University Statutes. If within their 15th year, and above their 12th, they must then *only subscribe* to the Articles. If they have not passed their 12th year, they may be matriculated; but when of proper age, must go through all the forms. All degrees in the English Colleges, in arts, laws, physic, music and divinity, are guarded by subscription. The Scottish Universities present in this respect a fine

example of liberality to the sister institutions in South Britain. For, though it is conjectured that the practice of matriculation by subscription was once the same there as in the South—and I am unable to mark the steps which led to this important change—no student has for a number of years been called upon for subscription, as necessary to his proceeding through the various classes of languages, philosophy, mathematics, law, medicine, or even of divinity, nor till he presents himself as a candidate for admission into the Church, which has expressed her creed in the Westminster Confession of Faith. It has been chiefly owing to this circumstance that two, at least, of the Scottish Universities have received a regular succession of English students, unable from the illiberal terms proposed at their own native institutions, to accept of the education which they furnish, and, therefore, gladly embracing, as their Alma Mater, a collegiate establishment, venerable for the intelligence and experience of its Academical Senate, and for the spirit of liberality towards all classes of students, which has long distinguished them. Still, however, it is, I believe, the practice for the Presbyteries to require subscription from all the parish schoolmasters of the land, (though some effort is about to be made for their relief,) as well as from all the Professors in the four Colleges, however remote their branch of tuition may be from the subject of religion; and, lastly, though with different degrees of strictness by different Presbyteries, from all candidates for admission into the Church. Thus, those who enter into “*holy orders*,” in the present advanced state of mental cultivation, must declare their unfeigned satisfaction with, and their thorough belief of, all the doctrinal positions which were expressed by their ancestors two centuries ago, though their own advantages for the discovery of truth are vastly greater than could have been enjoyed by the former. I said, with different degrees of strictness by different Presbyteries, for I have heard of some ministers allowing subscription to the Confession of Faith to be accompanied with the declaration, “*So far as it is agreeable to Scripture:*” and one young man, who

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\* Which, it is well known, was compiled by the Assembly of Presbyterian Divines from Scotland and England, meeting at Westminster; and this had been preceded by two others.

† It would not, I believe, be correct to say that no attempt has been made in that Church. Dr. Hardy and Dr. Dalrymple were advocates of the measure.

‡ “*I, A. B., do declare, that I am, bonâ fide, a member of the Church of England.*”

is a preacher in the Church of Scotland, lately told me, that he was licensed without subscription being required of him; \* one of the Presbyters simply affirming, that there was no reason to suspect the candidate's soundness of faith. This gleam of light in one of the corners of the land, may, perhaps, indicate the probability of a progress to greater liberality, and to the fullest recognition of the grand principle, so admirably expressed by the immortal Chillingworth, "The Bible, the Bible only, is the religion of Protestants." When that time comes, the ingenuity of men, suspicious of the perfect credibility of the multifarious articles of the Church's Confession, will no longer be strained to invent salvos similar to those which are commonly attributed to two Glasgow Professors.†

In the University of Dublin, subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles is not requisite to the taking of the degree of B. A. The members cannot, however, obtain a scholarship or fellowship without going through this ordeal, and, in addition, acknowledging that the King is the head of the Church, and partaking of the sacrament according to the form of the Church of England. Among the Presbyterian Dissenters, some Presbyteries require subscription from their students, others require it only on such terms as defeat the whole intention of such a law, by allowing young men to subscribe so far as they believe the confession consistent with Scripture, and a third party condemn the measure *in toto*. So long ago as

the reign of Queen Anne, the Synod of Munster repealed the law, not so much from a dislike to the doctrines entertained in the Confession of Faith, as to the principle of subscription itself. The Presbytery of Antrim, in the North, has long since followed that example.

The abolition of subscription at Geneva has been mentioned. The practice has, I hear, gone very much into desuetude among the Protestants in several parts of the continent, especially in Bavaria.

Whatever be the merits of Dr. Paley's scanty chapter on Subscription to Articles, in that part of his work which relates to religious establishments, (chap. x.,) he speaks so much the language of truth and sincerity, that I shall beg leave to cite a short passage: "Though some purposes of order and tranquillity may be answered by the establishment of creeds and confessions, yet are they at all times attended with very serious consequences. They check inquiry, they violate liberty, they ensnare the clergy by holding out temptations to prevarication. However they may express the persuasion or be accommodated to the controversies or the fears of the age in which they are composed, in process of time, and by reason of the changes which are wont to take place in the judgment of mankind upon religious subjects, they come at length to contradict the actual judgment of the Church, whose doctrines they profess to contain, and they perpetuate the proscription of sects and tenets from which any danger has long since ceased to be apprehended."

The following extract from a MS. work of a divine of the sister Church,\* feelingly describes a chief mischief which unavoidably arises from the use of confessions: "It seems to be an

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\* I have since learned that this is not a solitary instance. It is believed that the North of Scotland presents the most liberal aspect. The West is distinguished for its adherence to old forms.

† One of these, who had been a medical practitioner in that city previous to his appointment, is reported to have said, when called upon for subscription to the Confession of Faith, "Gentlemen, I have been a man of business; I shall settle this account as I have been accustomed to do in other cases. I will write opposite to my name, E. E." (errors excepted). Another, speaking after his election to the Professor's office, "When I am called upon to sign the Confession, I shall say, Here, Gentlemen, you have my creed, and a great deal *more*."

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\* The late able and Rev. Dr. Macgill, of Ayr, author of "A Practical Essay on the Death of Christ," for the want of orthodoxy in which, the excellent author was rudely treated by the Church Courts in Scotland. A copy of the MS. above referred to is in the possession of the writer of this Essay, who is happy here to express his conviction that Dr. M., though he retained his living in the Church of Scotland, did not, as some have supposed, make a recantation of his opinions.



inconsistency in the constitution of the Church itself, cleaving to all established churches that exist in the world, whether Popish or Protestant, only it is more glaring in the latter than in the former,—I mean that of putting two standards into the hands of their members, an infallible and a fallible one, and requiring them to follow both, and to find the one in all things perfectly consonant with the other. In Popish Churches this inconsistency does not so much appear, because there no minister is allowed to interpret the Scripture for himself, but is required to follow the interpretation of the Church as his absolute and infallible rule. (See the creed of Pope Pius IV.) Protestant Churches, on the contrary, not only allow but require him to follow the Scriptures as the only rule of faith and manners, which implies that he is to use all proper means to attain the true sense and right understanding of them. At the same time they let him know that if he discover any thing in the Scriptures inconsistent with their particular confessions and catechisms, he must either voluntarily resign his living, or they are entitled to deprive him of it. It was upon this ground that the prosecution before stated was founded. For though it was alleged, that the accused had said things contrary to the *word of God*, it was evident that the pith of the argument lay in his not having used the words and phrases which occur upon these subjects in the Confession and Catechisms of this Church, though they are no where to be found in Sacred Scripture. And in such cases the word of God seems to be introduced only for form's sake.

“There is here a real difficulty. On the side of human formulas stand ease and worldly interest and safety. On the side of the divine formula, the Scripture, nothing but conscience. No man can serve two masters. One of them must be uppermost. Conscience or worldly interest—the Scriptures or the Confession of Faith. But the Church of Scotland, as by law established, binds her ministers to the service of both, acknowledges in words the Scriptures to be supreme, but asserting in deed the supremacy of the Confession, at least over all her own members. The same, per-

haps, takes place in all other Established Churches throughout Christendom, and it is supposed and hath been affirmed that no Christian Church can be established on any other terms or in any other way.”

The reasonings and illustrations which have now been advanced may prepare us for an unqualified condemnation of the principle of imposing subscription to human articles of faith. The very nature of the thing seems repulsive to those independent and generous feelings of the uncorrupted heart which we cannot safely tamper with; it seems to be evidently contrary to the maxims adopted in every other department of thought and inquiry besides *religion*; and *here* it is so palpably opposed both to the spirit and letter of our great Master's instructions, that the wonder is, how so many ages should have passed away, and so many excellent and able persons been duped themselves, and attempted to dupe others, by a species of chicanery of the most revolting description, in the most solemn of all concerns, the formation of our judgments concerning God, and the means of obtaining his favour. I know not why the truth should be disguised, and bold and fearless language not be employed, in order to expose, as far as our feeble powers and influence will enable us, this prevalent, inveterate, but most pernicious species of *spiritual fraud*. On these two grounds, then, the *impolicy* and the *injustice* of requiring subscription to human formularies, I would, in perfect confidence, rest the merits of this question. For the *impolicy* of the measure, I content myself with saying in addition, that if in any other department of thought the human mind were fettered by subscription to the sentiments of predecessors, in the very words, too, in which they had expressed their sentiments, it is obvious that either a complete stop would be put to the progress of improvement, and the ideas would stagnate in the brain, without any possibility of their being formed into useful and practical maxims, or the interest of *literature*, of *medicine*, or of *jurisprudence*, to which this tyrannical influence was applied, would have been deficient in those glories which the free and cultivated mind has earned for itself and

for society in many an age.\* There have been periods indeed, and perhaps the principle is still in some measure in operation, in which, even on general subjects, too superstitious a reverence has been paid to the opinions of our predecessors, when it is recollected that they were men of the same infirmities as ourselves, subject to the same errors; and placed in circumstances far less favourable to the discovery of *truth*. We admire the diffidence and the modesty which lead the young man, not yet entered upon life, to bow to the convictions and experience of his seniors, in regard especially to the business of life, in which, from the very nature of the case, he cannot be so competent a judge. It is natural even on subjects of science and literature, that he should defer to the judgments which require a long process of previous training before the mind is possessed of the *facts* and *data* for the formation of a correct decision: and that disposition certainly argues any thing but sense and amiability, which leads a youth to *protrude* his notions in matters of religion, be they for or against the prevalent creed, in the company of intelligent and experienced inquirers, who must have had better means of informing themselves concerning the several branches of so intricate a science as the science of theology, viewed in all its bearings. But these observations will not apply to the man of mature age, of well-conducted education, imbued with the love of truth, and who has diligently employed his means in the search after its hidden treasures. Such a

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\* It has been well remarked by Mr. Dyer, (p. 18,) that "the Royal Society was founded for the advancement of natural knowledge; the Antiquarian, for the elucidation of antiquities; the College of Physicians, for encouragement of medicine. But would it not be amusing to have none admitted members, or to enjoy the benefits of those institutions, but subscribers to Thirty-nine old-fashioned Articles? No greater propriety is there in a *University* requiring such a test. As the former Corporations should be accessible to members of the same political communities, so should the latter." For the recent abolition of the Sacramental Test, in Gray's Inn, see Mon. Repos. for December last, p. 738.

one, living in this enlightened period of the world especially, ~~has no right~~ to defer to the judgments of others: ~~diffident~~ he will always be of the correctness of his opinions, and with sincere devotion will he apply to the Father of lights for further illumination; but to weak and fallible mortals like himself, he should *disdain* to pay that homage which belongeth to God only. To "lean on his own understanding," in preference to the mind and will of God, the pious man will never be disposed; but he will be no less indisposed to lean to the understandings of others in a case which lies immediately between God and his own conscience. And hence the manifest *injustice* of the whole proceeding—injustice on the part of persons making the most solemn profession of religion, bound by their profession to pay the most sacred regard to the rights of men and the laws of God; and yet, either from a culpable negligence to enlighten their own minds, from the slavish influence of early prepossession and popular prejudice, or from a selfish desire to confine the privileges of their order to men of precisely the same stamp with themselves, shall go on from age to age in the perpetuation of this most monstrous abuse, in exposing the Christian religion to the scoffs and ridicule of mankind, stabbing the gospel in its most vital interests, and exerting, ignorantly perhaps, but really exerting, all their power to cramp the genius of religion, and to hinder its beneficial operation among the sons of men. Amidst this general defection which characterizes, alas! so many portions of Christendom—and, may we blush to own, particularly characterizes the Established Churches of Great Britain, of Scotland, so ennobled for her energy in the good cause of reformation, after her elder sister Geneva has set the memorable example of abolishing all subscription to articles of faith—it is refreshing to find even one solitary instance of a Scottish clergyman\* relinquishing the emoluments resulting from the discharge of his wonted duties, and at

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\* The Rev. James Shirriff, of St Ninians, now a Baptist Minister in Glasgow. See Mon. Repos. XVIII. 427, 675.

the call of principle and of honour, evidently in opposition to all inducements of a selfish nature, resolving to pursue the rugged and, in Scotland, the seldom-beaten track of seceding from the Established Church, nobly taking his stand upon the inalienable right of private judgment and the iniquity of requiring subscription to the dogmas of man's invention. The respectable person to whom I allude, is known to hold opinions highly Calvinistic, so that his reputation will not, I trust, suffer from the feeble but honest praise which my subject\* and my profound admiration lead me to bestow on one whose *conduct* raises him infinitely higher than any ecclesiastical preferment could have raised him in the estimation of good men of every Christian party, is more than any thing calculated to uphold the sacred cause of religion, which has suffered so sensibly from the vices and selfishness of many a pretended friend, and will, I trust, not remain a solitary instance of integrity in that part of the country, in a cause in which, of all others, it is most absolutely necessary, and most peremptorily enjoined, that integrity should be evinced.

If then the arguments of this Essay, and the facts and authorities that have been introduced, carry with them any thing of the weight which they seem to the writer to possess, one thing is certain, that even previous to an examination of the separate formularies of the two Established Churches of Great Britain, (a similar remark, indeed, will apply to the candidates for admission into the larger Dissenting bodies of Scotland,† only with a ten-

fold strength, suited to the incomparably greater disgrace which recoils on the heads of *Dissenters* requiring subscription to human formularies,) the ingenuous and conscientious student who has faithfully exerted his faculties in the attainment of the necessary knowledge and in the slow and deliberate formation of his opinions, when called upon, previous to the receiving of a licence, (one of those terms which ought never to be used in reference to a Christian profession,) to sign a formulary, entitled a Confession of Faith, or the Thirty-nine Articles, may, with laudable, natural, and Christian disdain, repel the *temptation*. "Get thee behind me, Satan," the words of our Master when his principles were exposed to actual experiment, were not more proper in his case than in that of every conscientious candidate for the sacred office when solicited by *the tempter*, bearing the name of a Christian minister, who invites him—for this has been shewn to be the case—to forswear the sufficiency of the words of God, and to bind himself by an oath to the opinions and the words of men. This ought, I conceive, to be his conduct, even upon the supposition, which all who are acquainted with the doctrine of chances will know to be highly improbable, that of the many hundred separate positions which these confessions contain, he can from actual examination say that he believes them all.

But on the contrary supposition, that it be the result of accurate inquiry that these confessions contain a variety of propositions of the most dubious description, a great many more that are contradictory, many which would reflect most highly upon the character of our heavenly Parent, many which have estranged from the communion of the Church some of the brightest geniuses and most benevolent and pious Christians—surely I have a right to affirm, that the continuance of subscription to the Confession of Faith and Catechisms in Scotland, and the Thirty-nine Articles in England, is one of the most

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\* I might also have made reference to the enlightened zeal of the projectors of the Metropolitan University, in their aiming to confer the advantages of the higher branches of education, without subscription to the "old-fashioned Articles," and without distinction of sect or party. Surely this comprehensive scheme, under judicious direction, bids fair to contribute the most essential benefits to our country, and to reflect distinguished honour on the age which has given it birth.

† It is presumed that a majority of English Dissenters, with the exception of the Methodists, who virtually subscribe to the writings of John Wesley, have dis-

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continued the practice. But the Scottish Presbyterians, that are out of the Establishment, even enforce it with greater vigour than the Church itself.



glaring departures from Christian principle, most loudly calls for a nation's interference, and must be most displeasing to that gracious Being who hath supplied the energies of the free-born mind, who hath invested us with the liberty by which the gospel would make us free, and hath impressed upon every virtuous feeling of our hearts, as well as every conviction of our understandings, when the one is uncorrupted with worldliness and the other unfettered by self-interest, the most confirmed detestation and the most supreme contempt for such unmanly, injurious and anti-christian interference with the religious rights of the human race.

B. M.

London,  
Feb. 12, 1826.

SIR,  
YOUR correspondent Clericus Cantabrigiensis (p. 3) thinks there are "numerous theological and metaphysical propositions to which it is impossible to refuse our belief, though at the same time they confessedly exceed the limits of human comprehension." And he goes on to say, that "in a greater or less degree *mystery* appears to be inseparable from many doctrinal points of religion as well as of metaphysics." Now it appears to me, that religion and metaphysics ought not thus to be connected, and that though his assertion may be true as regards the latter, it by no means follows that it is so with respect to the former. We learn religion from that revelation which God has vouchsafed to give us, but we have no metaphysical revelation that I know of. If a revelation is a making known any thing, it follows that to be known it must be understood, or it is no revelation. Or, as Dr. Whitby truly says, "What is truly a mystery, cannot be a revelation made by God; and to require any man to believe what we confess to be a mystery, is to require him to believe what God hath not revealed in his word." (Discourse V.) And believing thus, I certainly am among the number of those who think "the term *mystery* ought to be abolished as connected with Christianity," because the thing itself, as so connected, is abolished. I think, with Robert Robinson, that "if Paul when he first stood up in the syna-

gogue at Ephesus to teach Christianity, had begun his discourse by saying, 'Men of Ephesus, I am going to teach a religion which none of you can understand,' he would have insulted his hearers, disgraced himself, and misrepresented the religion of Jesus Christ."

The sense in which Paul uses the term *mystery* appears to be some counsel, decree or dispensation of God regarding his creatures, which had been hidden from them, but was now made known, that is, was no longer a mystery. The following passages from his Epistle to the Ephesians may serve as examples: Chap. i. 9, "Having made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself," &c. Chap. ii. 3, "By revelation he made known to me the mystery, (as I wrote afore in a few words, whereby when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ,) which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles," &c. Again, vers. 8, 9, "Unto me is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God," &c. Chap. vi. 19, "Praying for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel." Here Paul evidently speaks (and in many other passages of similar import) of the revelation which it pleased God to make of his mind and will, and which, until it was so made known, was "hid in him," but was now revealed by the mission of Christ to all men. The knowledge of this mystery had been imparted to Paul, and he tells the Ephesians that whatever he knew they might also know. The mystery was at an end. The appearance of our Saviour, his declaration of the new covenant, his resurrection, and the preaching of the apostles, had dispersed the previous darkness and called all the sons of men to the enjoyment of light and liberty. In the religion of the New Testament I can find nothing mysterious. True it is that men have invented doctrines and passed them off for parts of Chris-

tiarity, which are sufficiently so. They have also invented terms in which to describe them. I remember reading a Calvinistic writer who made it out very clearly that the Deity would have been reduced to a dilemma, but for the satisfaction which he received by the death of Christ. Now with all these inventions, and with the jargon and slang by which they are supported, I have nothing to do. If I am censured because I don't believe in such "scriptural" mysteries, my answer is, "Prove that they are scriptural, and when you have done that, blame, but not before."

If "mysteriousness does not" (according to your correspondent) "afford a substantial argument against the truth of any doctrine which involves no absolute contradiction," it is certainly very strong *prima facie* evidence against its truth, if he means to apply his remark to revelation, since the object of revelation, as we have seen, was not to perpetuate but to abolish mystery.

#### A NONCONFORMIST.

*Critical Synopsis of the Monthly Repository for February, 1825.*

**EXTRACT FROM REVUE ENCYCLOPÉDIQUE.** Choice: The North-American Review recommends this publication as the most valuable, for Americans, of foreign journals.

*Lord Bolingbroke on the N. W. Passage.* I know not how Captain Parry "has dashed Lord Bolingbroke's eloquence to pieces." Has the passage in question yet been actually navigated? Are not his Lordship's discouraging representations, to all practical purposes, still true?

*The "Faith of the Heart."* Mr. Worsley's illustrations of this essay are quite commendable. May I not add, that one reason why examples of shining virtue are so often united to revolting systems of belief, is the following? The very act of admitting absurd and repulsive doctrines implies a previous *humility* of heart, which is the basis also of a thousand virtues. Thus the excellencies of character which we admire in so many Calvinists, flow not necessarily forth, as they wrongly imagine, from the peculiarities of their creed, but are often

derived from a source which God Almighty himself planted before a single proposition of Calvin addressed itself to their minds.

Another distinction on this subject must be attended to, which I think is rarely observed with accuracy. It will be seen in the preceding remarks that I do not deny great excellence of character to be *sometimes* the result of Calvinistic doctrinal peculiarities. The question is, are such doctrines therefore necessarily true and scriptural? In other words, are the moral effects of any opinion, in individual cases, an exact criterion of its truth? I maintain that they are not. Let us take for instance the doctrine of *election*. Convince a man that the omniscient, all-wise, adorable and glorious God has from past eternity sent forward his awful regards, and selected *him* from among millions of his fellow-beings who are doomed to perish, while *he* is destined to an eternity of inconceivable felicity—and pray what is to be expected as the natural effect of such a conviction on a mind of any purity or sensibility? Clearly, to awaken the most profound gratitude to God, a mysterious reverence for one's self, and a determinedness to act up to the lofty destination which has thus been the eternal and special care of heaven. Now that some minds have been affected in this manner, is no more a testimony in favour of the doctrine of election, than the good behaviour of my child for a day, in consequence of his nurse's promise that he shall go to court to-morrow and be presented to the King of England by the King's desire, is a proof of the nurse's veracity. Until this consideration occurred to me, I have not seldom been staggered and perplexed by the undeniable difference which is very frequently witnessed between the depth of Unitarian and Calvinistic piety. I could not but feel convinced that our opinions were essentially and incontrovertibly true; and yet, I would ask myself, and it was pushed home upon me also by orthodox friends, Why do not these opinions, which are freest from error, exert, in all cases, the most positive and lasting good effects? And then, some instance among our mutual acquaintances would be adduced, to give point and force to the argument.

Such instances, I doubt not, are within the cognizance of most of my readers, of individuals who are really transformed by Calvinistic notions into perfect, happy beings—whose tempers can never be ruffled—and who preserve, amidst the trivial duties of life, a certain elevated and mysterious sanctity, to which we poor Arminian strugglers after “sincere though imperfect obedience” cannot for our lives attain.

Such were my difficulties (for I am now rehearsing my Unitarian “experiences”) until I began to question the maxim, to which I had hitherto yielded a tacit and undoubting assent, that *it is speculative truth alone which in every particular instance is productive of the most valuable effects.* The child who is told that the bears shall come and eat him up, behaves himself delightfully for an hour or two—no angel is so fascinating, so sweet, so obedient. But will the bears therefore in very deed come and eat him up, even if he sets the whole house into an uproar? The Roman Catholic girl is often perhaps an astonishing pattern of the most perfect religious and moral propriety. But can the Confessional and the Purgatory, which haunt her imagination by day and by night, and thus become to her the efficacious substitutes, or at least the powerful helps of the nicest moral sense, *on that account* lay claim for their origin *to truth, to scripture, and to righteousness?* Henceforth, then, let me not be told, that the superior sanctity of life which may in a few instances be attained under Calvinistic preaching, are necessarily demonstrations that that preaching is founded on the Bible.

And yet I am not going to be so loose and latitudinarian as to leave the matter here. I pray not to be misunderstood. I would still maintain, that notwithstanding these occasional individual instances to the contrary, THE TRUTH, whatever it may be, must, on the whole, and, to use a vulgar expression, in the long run, be most entirely productive of virtue and happiness to mankind. My child's nurse shall never promise him a delusive interview with the King of England; she shall never threaten him with being devoured by the bears, although every other possible expe-

dient should fail to coax or to intimidate him into temporary regularity. Because, I am convinced that other maxims of education and moral government, if resolutely persevered in, will most successfully conduce to his ultimate virtue and felicity. And thus, even though I had never witnessed or heard of a single instance of the mischievous effects of Calvinism; though I had never seen it most cruelly hardening the heart against some of the sweetest charities of life; though I had never known it to inflate its possessor with the most intolerable spiritual pride, nor excuse and sanctify in his eye the indulgence of the worst passions; though I were not at all aware that it had ever driven a single wretched being into the utter madness of desperation, nor hurried forward others into the practical excesses of Antinomian presumption, nor benumbed the large and uninitiated portion of many a Christian congregation into a hopeless indifference, or a reckless and indefinite expectation of some future period of personal repentance; yet, as long as I perceived so many arguments from Scripture, from analogy with the known character of God, and from abstract reasoning, to preponderate in favour of speculative Unitarianism, I would still repose my entire confidence in that system; I would believe that its general and ultimate tendencies would be most salutary; that its influences would carry human nature to as high a degree of moral and religious excellence as the whole of human nature can bear; and that a time would sooner or later arrive, when the perfection of virtue and happiness shall be the invariable result of inculcating the perfection of TRUTH.

Religious newspapers, which appear to be a novel matter to Mr. Worsley's experience, are extremely abundant in America. I had thought that we must have followed England in this, as we have in so many other good things.

*Archdeacon Paley's Creed.* I happened to be present at the original delivery of the Memoir of Mr. Chase here alluded to, as it assumed the form of a funeral address. I could not but be struck with the inconsistency into which the rites of the speaker's own church betrayed him,



with respect to some of the sentiments quoted by your correspondent. Immediately preceding the address, the xvth chap. of 1 Cor. had, as is usual, been read. We were there told, that as by man came death, so also by man came the resurrection of the dead—and that a time would come when Christ would put down all rule and all authority and power. After this, I could not but blush from a mingled feeling of pity and triumph, when the orator spoke of Mr. Chase as having been “thankful for being preserved from what he considered the *melancholy error* of the respectable university wherein he received his education.”

*Dr. Evans on General Baptists.* I regret that this pleasing correspondent should, on such slender grounds, have hazarded the assertion, that Dr. Gale was a Trinitarian.

He speaks of Southey. I have always been under the impression that the Poet Laureate himself was, in the outset of his career, a flaming Unitarian.

*Dr. Fordyce's Stumbling at the Marriage Service.* It seems to have been pretty resolute and deliberate “stumbling.” *Plunging* were the better word.

*Mr. Cogan on the Greek Article.* What Mr. Cogan denominates a *circumstance of difference*, would, I fear, by a Trinitarian, be called, a *begging of the question*. For my own part, however, I am satisfied with his positions.

*Mr. Taylor on Evangelical Declaration of War.* But is there any danger of success on the part of these evangelicals? At all events, I dislike the vindictive spirit of Mr. Taylor's communication. Surely, that gentleman and his friends would not, on second thoughts, withhold the donations he mentions from the beneficiaries who now receive them, even though they should concur in the foul project in question, of which they yet are probably entirely innocent.

*Dr. J. P. Smith's Reply to Mr. Gibson.* Two technical terms, Justification and Sanctification,\* which ori-

ginally referred to certain obligations and ceremonials of the Jewish law, have been seized upon by some imaginative and generalizing readers of the Bible, and erected into magnificent, imposing abstractions, involving and confounding all our ideas of universal morality.

The only occasion on which these terms need ever be used, except perhaps figuratively, and by way of point or illustration, is, when an opponent is contending for the superior authority of the Mosaic law over that general sense of moral propriety and rectitude which God has implanted in the universal heart of man, and which Christ and his apostles vindicated against the prejudiced advocates of the declining Mosaic religion.\*

Can we be considered as righteous or *justified* before God without submitting to all the restrictions of the levitic ceremonial? Can we be regarded as holy in the sight of man, or *sanctified*, without undergoing the same burdensome process? Yes, maintain Christ and St. Paul; the internal force of moral character alone, (which, to be sure, is the gift of God, and may still further be assisted by the influences of his spirit,) may effect these purposes; and Jews and Gentiles are in this respect on the same footing.

In consequence of more or less directly inculcating this blessed and inestimable doctrine, Jesus resigned his life, and thus became OUR SACRIFICE.

Entertaining, as I do, what Dr.

course, when asked how he had been impressed, half-seriously and half-jokingly reply, “Bless me, if I have understood one word of it except Justification and Sanctification.” Poor fellow! the last words he could probably have understood were these. But having heard them rung into his ears from his infancy, he had no doubt that he had as clear conceptions of them as of any rope in his ship.

The late excellent Mr. Thacher, author of the discourse on the Unity of God, once told me, that he found *Δικαιοσύνη* the most difficult word in the New Testament to understand.

\* I apprehend the most candid reader of the Quarterly Review must acknowledge the account given of Justification in the article on Mr. Belsham's late work to be unsatisfactory in the extreme.

\* I remember once hearing a sailor, after sitting with no little patience under the preaching of a most profound dis-

Smith will undoubtedly regard these low and unworthy views of the subject, but which, I can assure him, are, in all their legitimate consequences, connexions and relations, as precious to me and the world as his more complicated and metaphysical refinements are to him, I will not attempt to describe how unsatisfying to my mind is the long array of definitions, distinctions and modifications, with which he has answered the simple queries of Mr. Gibson.

After the foregoing exposure of my general views, it would of course be irrelevant to enter into a detailed examination of those of Dr. Smith. For since we both set out from totally different interpretations and uses of scriptural language, we might discuss the subject for ever without approaching any nearer together. I would be indulged, however, in a few desultory remarks, just to shew into what strange dilemmas Dr. S. is liable to fall, when he strains the local language of scripture into some mysterious and transcendental system, which he would adopt over and above a plain code of Christian and sublunary ethics.

In one place he seems to speak of Sanctification as if it originated from the human subject, (p. 78, top of col. 2,) and in another as if it were a work of divine power and goodness.

His account of the defects of Sanctification in the true Christian, represents them as no defects at all. For, according to him, a state of sanctification is "a holy sensibility and justness of feeling, by virtue of which it detests all sin, and loves and pursues all holiness." But exactly such a state, it seems according to him, the true Christian preserves in the midst of his *defects* of sanctification, since they are all the time "felt, lamented and opposed, in sincerity and with constancy." This is a plain proof that the Doctor has no sort of clear idea at all of what he is after in that dim and mystic figment of Sanctification at which he strains. In attempting to guard his system from inconsistency, he runs against the bigger rock of absurdity. It never would have done for him to allow that defects of Sanctification were *real* defects, because he had before maintained that Justification and Sanctification are for ever inseparable, and if the latter

were defective, the former must be so too, which he cannot admit to be the case in *any degree* with the "true Christian." Yet that there is something *like* defects of sanctification in Christians, was too notorious for him to deny. He had no other way to get rid of them than by an explanation which, as we have seen above, actually denied the very thing he was explaining.

Dr. Smith's subsequent attempt to explain the sins of the saints in a philosophical way, is clumsy, invidious, and, I must say, somewhat ridiculous. I want to know why the circumstances which he enumerates with such analytical skill and exactness as causing true Christians to sin, may not explain the sins also of a great majority of mankind. I will ever maintain that Unitarian wickedness is as good a thing in itself as Calvinistic wickedness. Why, this is a pretty daring attempt, truly, thus to embalm the defects of his sect, and to contend that they even SIN from better motives than other people! If we allow this, we shall give up the only common ground on which we stand with our adversaries. Long has our comfort and defence been, that *they* are sometimes human as well as ourselves. But here their very transgressions are consecrated, and etherialized into something less offensive than ours. Never was such intolerable pride and vanity. Never was a more dangerous maxim advanced. It is the basis of a fifth monarchy. Lamenting Antinomian extravagancies too in almost the same breath! But I will let the reader into the secret of this outrage upon theological decency. The consistency of Dr. Smith's system would have been violated without it. His great and favourite maxim is, that Justification always keeps pace with Sanctification. But, as he says, there are no "*degrees*" in Justification. It is either every thing or nothing. "It either is or is not." Now, if you allow Sanctification to be essentially corrupted in any manner, Justification goes too, and Dr. Smith's system goes with it. Hence it is, that he is so anxious to maintain a *better way* of sinning among the elect—one that is not quite so wicked as other people's—one, in short, which, however unsanctified it may be, shall still be consistent with

"*Sanctification*"! Is this the man who wonders that Unitarians should be ignorant of so very plain and clear a doctrine? And, after all, will the reader believe that our invidious caustic knows not how to dispose of those "dreadful falls" which sometimes happen to "true Christians;" thus leaving the whole subject in the same darkness, from which he originally set out to clear it!

But what little note have we here? Is it possible that this was penned by a pretender to candour? While writing the word THIEVES against certain trustees, and presumptuously excluding them from the kingdom of God, did not the word REVILERS stare him in the face out of the same passage whence he borrowed the other? Might not the expression *rapacious men*, also, in the same passage, suggest a certain description of persons, who, for the sake of getting the controul of a few unsteeped buildings, would introduce maxims that must exclude the wholesome principle of PRESCRIPTION, arrest the gentle progress of improvement, re-establish idolatry at Rome, and the mass at London, and upturn society from its lowest foundations?

To return to the text. Have we not something like an Arminian concession in this writer's view of the atonement, which, he says, was made, *not to purchase* the Father's grace, but as a *fruit and effect* of that grace? Surely controversy has its uses, when it thus drives the Calvinist from one position to another, until the obnoxious peculiarities of his religion are cleared away from the field. Precisely the same process is going on in America.

The extracts from Dr. Ryland exhibit the same great delusion, the same self-complacent infatuation which so many Calvinistic writers, from the Genevan downward, display, in attempting to answer objections against their doctrines. They protest against certain consequences being drawn from their dogmas, they maintain that their views are true, *saving and excepting* your objections, and then they think the business is done. Still the consequences must and will be drawn, the objections are still in force. I never can think that Calvinism will be very extensively or permanently popular in the world. There is, in a

majority of mankind, a vein of practical good sense, an obstinate anti-metaphysical tendency, which must resist its doctrines and influences. Indeed, I fear there is scarcely metaphysics enough going, to endure even the *refutation* of them. I am aware that Dr. Smith will call this practical good sense nothing but *native corruption*, and here, therefore, we must part from each other.

*Mr. Baker's Defence of Ordination Services*, I think, successful.

*Jesus the Son of God*. What is the worth of speculations on the mere physical constitution of Christ, compared with those everlasting moral and spiritual principles and sentiments which he enforced and died for, and which are essential to the true health of the soul?

*Dr. Jones's further Proofs respecting Josephus*. I like St. Paul's and St. Peter's Christianity better than Josephus's.

*On Anti-Supernaturalism*. The alternative maintained by this writer, is not, I apprehend, so extreme as he states it to be. The Anti-Supernaturalist, as I candidly imagine, does not necessarily suppose that the divine mission of Jesus was a "pretence." He regards the language of Jesus and his apostles as sincere and expressive, in the main, of truth and facts;—only, when reduced to the scale of modern, occidental, philosophical precision, it means, he thinks, much more than they intended it to mean.

*Professor Lee, Dr. Henderson and Mr. Bellamy*. It would seem incredible that any man should think of controverting Dr. Henderson's critical maxim here quoted, with the glaring expression in it before him, "*where the same sense remains.*"

I admire Mr. Bellamy's management of the word *messenger* for *angel*. I demur at his treatment of Gen. ii. 21, 22. I am incredulous about your lively correspondent's explanation of the clause, *as one of us*, in Gen. iii. 22. I beg you to print your German a little more correctly.

As respects Mr. Bellamy, his vibrating reputation is yet to swing back again, and settle at its proper point. He, like Dr. Jones, is to receive the thanks of the coming generation, for pouring much golden light on the Scriptures, while the *outré*s



of both (if I may manufacture a French word) are to be pardoned and dismissed by the candid and discriminating student.

REVIEW. Art. 1. *Wellbeloved's Letters to Wrangham*. The compiler of that fascinating little volume, *The Literary Souvenir* for 1825, had applied to Archdeacon Wrangham for some contributions to it. The dignitary, in addition to translations of six of Petrarch's Sonnets, sent him the following production of his own pen. Little was I aware of the full force of the expression I have marked with italics, until I had read the Review before me.

"Soiled, but with no inglorious dust, by  
tomes,  
Beseeching well the Churchman to explore,  
Of venerable Fathers, 'mid whose lore  
From proof to proof, the eye enraptur'd  
roams,  
Or crimson'd with the blood that spouts  
its foams  
Where the frock'd gladiators rave and  
roar—  
How shall I my unworthy hand fling o'er  
The gentle lyre, or crop the Muse's  
blossoms?  
Ill may the fingers, by polemic thorn  
Festered, essay the magic shell to sweep,  
Or (all unused) the glitt'ring wreath en-  
twine;  
Yet will I, at thy bidding, brave the  
scorn  
Of mightier bards, and climb proud Del-  
phi's steep,  
And lay my chaplet in lov'd Phœbus'  
shrine."

Mr. Wellbeloved's view of the opinions of the Ante-nicene fathers on the Trinity has been very learnedly maintained by Professor Stewart, of our country, in a controversy with Dr. Miller, on "the eternal generation of the Son of God." Mr. Stewart, although an orthodox professor at Andover, thinks there was no Son of God until Jesus was born of Mary, but that there existed a triune "distinction" in the Deity from all eternity! Employing terms of the greatest tenderness and respect, these two gentlemen mutually charge each other with the crime of Arianism.

Art. 2. *My Children's Diary*. The remark of the Reviewer on this book might be extended very generally. Most books are duller in the beginning than in the middle, with the ex-

ception of such as are prepared with a kind of professional and practised skill. I usually find the third quarter of a book the most on fire with the subject, and therefore plod patiently through the preceding portions.

Art. 3. *Carpenter's York-Street Sermon*. One would like to hear more about this York-Street Chapel. Have there been more than some vague allusions to its constitution, &c., in the Repository?

Art. 4, &c. *Wright's Tracts*. Well reviewed.

*American Publications*. Mr. Thacher's Sermon on the Unity of God, though first printed in Liverpool, might have been enumerated in the opening note.

If I am not mistaken, "Hints to Unitarians" were written by Rev. Mr. Dewey, of New-Bedford, instead of Professor Norton.

Are we to understand from the allusion here made to Rammohun Roy, in connexion with Dr. Channing and Mr. Adam, that the first-named individual considers Jesus as more than a man?

The mention of the Christian Examiner induces me to give my humble testimony to its character. There is probably no other work of its kind extant. It is remarkable for fearlessly encountering, in this volatile age, the discussion of the most trite subjects on general religion and morality. It brings, however, to the task, a happy splendour of illustration, a style unrivalled for its classical purity, a beautiful exactness and fulness of method, and an original vein of thinking. This department of it will very richly repay and delight those readers who are willing, for their own improvement, to make merely a beginning, impulsive effort, sure afterwards to be conducted along by a spontaneous excitement. But in its learned, able and interesting discussions of the leading controversial, moral and miscellaneous topics of the day, (including, of course, the Review department,) even its first-sight attractions will yield to none.

*Poetry*. A vivid spirit glows in these five little pieces, which exhibit also an excellent talent at English versification. They shall all go into our "Poetry of the Monthly Repository."

*Obituary.* It is to be hoped that Thomas Green, Esq., of Ipswich, has left many MSS. in a condition for publication.

**INTELLIGENCE.** *Evangelical Declaration of War.* Should any thing like a hostile movement appear to be in good earnest making against the Unitarian chapels, all that the denomination have to do, is simply to bring a bill before Parliament, for a statute confirming them in their present privileges. I presume there will be no fear with regard to the course upon this subject, which that enlightened body would immediately and almost unanimously take. Else, what may become of the Parliament itself?

*Receipts of Religious Societies.* Unitarian Societies appear to be beneath the mention of the Missionary Register.

*List of Joint-Stock Companies.* My remarks on the March number of the Repository were written and transmitted before I had read the February number, which was temporarily mislaid. Had I seen the Editor's apology for inserting this List, some animadversions made upon the continuation of it in the number for March might have been suppressed.

Let us not too severely condemn the disposition towards this mode of investing money. It is unfair to compare it with the South-Sea mania of a century since. The situation of the country is different from what it then was, a prodigious developement of resources, relations and avenues for the employment of money has taken place since that period. The idle capital of the country is vastly greater. The projects now brought forward are generally of a practical nature and of domestic locality. And what is more to the point, instead of being directed towards one grand distant visionary scheme, capital is proposed to be divided into five or six hundred different little channels, which will in general be as likely to realize something, as if the same amount were exposed to the common risks of trade, or the ordinary methods of inactive investment.

SIR,

**I** PERCEIVE that in my last (p. 85) I have inconsiderately drawn an erroneous inference from T. F. B.'s

rendering of a passage quoted from Herodotus, which I wish to acknowledge, in justice both to your ingenious correspondent and to myself.

Your American critic has now a second time turned my attention to the canon respecting the Greek article. My view of the subject may be briefly expressed as follows: The canon relates to two or more nouns denoting attributes of one and the same subject. But God and our Lord Jesus Christ are perpetually distinguished from each other. *Κυριος Ιησους Χριστος* is used again and again for the Lord Jesus Christ when the word *Θεος* precedes; and when *ο Θεος* precedes, it will be found that the article was required by the usage of the Greek language. These circumstances form a clear line of distinction between those cases in which the canon holds good, and those to which certain Trinitarian divines have wished to apply it.

E. COGAN.

SIR,

**B**ENGELIUS, who, in his edition of the New Testament, has annexed a very able defence of the genuineness of 1 John v. 7, says, that in the second century a secret system of theology was received into the Christian Church, which required the text of the three heavenly witnesses to be withdrawn from the copies used by the public. "*Hæc (Disciplina Arcani) sæculo II est introducta: hæc jam tum multos, ut apparet, induxit, ut initio a codicibus publicæ duntaxat lectioni destinatis, dictum removeretur*" in loco, § xxv. The *Disciplina Arcani* meant, was the doctrine of the Trinity; and the same learned critic quotes the following words of *Cassiodorus*: *Exercit. ad Baron. xvi. n. 43, Non est ignorandum in tradendo mysterio Trinitatis summopere cavisse veteres, ne apud Paganos aut Christianos, adhuc informos, de tanti arcani ratione temere verba facerent: that is, "We ought not to be ignorant that in communicating the mystery of the Trinity, the ancients were exceedingly cautious, lest they should unadvisedly lay open the grounds of so great a secret before Pagans or Christians as yet weak in the faith."*

Even so early as the fourth century, a belief in the Trinity was required of every convert who, on being bap-



ized, became a member of the orthodox church. But this confession was required of him not in public, but before the initiated; and Chrysostom, in his Homily on 1 Cor. xv. 29, declines insisting on this part of the creed, avowedly because he was addressing the *uninitiated*. His words, as translated by Bengelius, are the following: "Aperte dicere non audeo, propter eos qui non sunt initiati: dicam autem tecte." The persons to be baptized underwent a severe discipline of forty days, before the creed was administered unto them. This is attested by Jerome to Pammachius. His words are, Consuetudo apud nos hujusmodi est, ut his qui baptizandi sunt, per xl dies publice tradamus sanctam et adorandam Trinitatem. Nor were the *catechumens* allowed to be spectators of the ceremony, but were previously dismissed. The priest then gave orders that the door should be bolted: "Ostia, Ostia, prudenter obdamus." Then immediately the Creed was read. I will add here the words of Gregory Nazianzen, as translated by Dr. Burgess: "Above all subjects there is the greatest danger in treating of the doctrine of the blessed Trinity, lest they who have the office of public instruction, while they are anxious to avoid the language of Polytheism, should appear to acknowledge only one person, representing the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost to be one and the same person, and their names empty distinctions; or, on the contrary, so discriminate the three persons as to make them three Gods;" that is, lest they should become *Unitarians*, who maintained the unity of God, or Polytheists, believing in three distinct Gods. This passage is very important: but its import cannot be fully comprehended without some knowledge of the controversy which then divided the Christian Church.

*Sabellius*, Bishop of Pentapolis, in Libya, interpreted the text of the three heavenly witnesses precisely in the sense which the Apostle gave to it. For this nothing was necessary but to understand the term *Logos* in the sense understood by John, namely, the attributes of God *personified* and invested in the man Jesus, to prove his divine mission from the Father; and sometimes, as in the disputed

text, applied to Jesus, to designate him in his *official capacity*. Taken in this view, the Father, the *Logos* and the Holy Spirit, are but three different names, expressing three different relations of one and the same Being. Sabellius, then, like Praxeas before him, and like Marcellus, Paul, of Samosata, and Photinus who succeeded, was strictly an *Unitarian*. Now, reader, mark the injustice which the orthodox, his mortal enemies, have done to this learned and honest man. While the *Logos*, as understood by Sabellius, was only a personification, or an ideal being, the Son of God, endued with the *Logos*, was a *real* being; but in order to stigmatize him as *heretical* and absurd, they substituted in his creed, which was grounded on the disputed verse, *the Son* for *the Logos*; and thus they represent him as believing "the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost to be one and the same person, and their names empty distinctions." Nor were they satisfied with imputing this absurdity to him. If the Father and the Son were the same person, the former must have experienced the sufferings and death which the Son is known to have undergone; and hence the orthodox called Sabellius and Praxeas *Patripassians*, which is an evident calumny.

In the time of *Tertullian*, the majority of Christians were believers in the Divine Unity. This very writer calls them, *major pars credentium*. The adoption of the Trinity was confined to the learned only; and their attempts to impose it on the unlearned, met the most decided opposition. Common sense instructed and emboldened the people to charge their blind guides with idolatry, as making three instead of one God. *Duos et tres jam jactitant a nobis prædicari, se vero unius Dei cultores presumunt.* Tertul. p. 502.

My object, in the next place, is to shew that the famous *Nicene Creed* is founded on the suppression of the controverted text, and enforces the orthodox interpretation of it, which was originally intended against the Unitarians, in opposition to the followers of Arius. This will appear from the disputes which more immediately called forth the *Nicene Creed*—from the Creed itself; and finally



from a counter creed soon after published at Antioch by the Arian Bishops.

Alexander, Bishop of Alexandria, on one occasion assembled his Presbyters or clergy, and proposed to have their opinion on a certain verse, not named, concerning the Trinity; at the same time giving it as his own opinion that there is an unity in the three persons, φιλοτιμότερον περι τῆς ἁγίας Τριάδος, ἐν Τριάδι μονάδα εἶναι φιλοσοφῶν, εθεολογεί. Here it is necessary to remark, that Τριάς in Greek is not the same with the Latin *Trinitas*: because the former means only the *number three*, or a *whole* consisting of three parts; whereas the latter is an abbreviation of *triunitas*, *three in one*. Hence it was necessary for Alexander, who spoke Greek, in teaching the Trinity, to say, ἐν Τριάδι μονάδα εἶναι. It is evident that the Greek *triad* was applicable to the number three of any kind: and Clement, of Alexandria, actually expresses by it, *faith*, *hope* and *charity*. Theophilus, of Antioch, applies the same numeral to God, to his Word, and to his Wisdom, or his Holy Spirit. Dr. Priestley and other learned men, who did not observe the above distinction, assert that Theophilus is the first who has used the term *Trinity*. But this is a mistake: that writer only gives a connumeration of God with his attributes, which he calls his Word and his Wisdom, without intending to assert their unity.

Now, looking on the bare assertion of Alexander, that ἐν τῇ Τριάδι μονάδα εἶναι, I should not hesitate to say that he alluded to the text of the three heavenly witnesses, the *Triad* meaning the Father, Word and Holy Spirit, and the *Monad*, the clause which says, "And these three are one." In saying this, I rest not on mere presumption; but have evidence sufficient for it. Arius was one of his Presbyters and in the number of his hearers: and when he heard his bishop saying, that there was an unity in the three persons, he instantly concluded that he was introducing *Sabellianism* into the church. How this was, appears from what I have said above. Sabellius, like every other competent Unitarian, considered the Logos and the Holy Spirit as but emanations of the Father personified, and all three form-

ing one Being under three different names.

The alarm which Arius took on this occasion, and the violent opposition which he gave to his bishop, demonstrate that hitherto no one, at least in the Greek Church, however great his authority, dared publicly to avow the doctrine of the Trinity, or the doctrine of three persons in one godhead. This is a remarkable fact, to which I invite the attention of my readers. It places in the clearest light the prevalence of Unitarianism even so late as the beginning of the fourth century, though the heads of the churches had long used all their arts and influence to put it down.

The flame of controversy, which thus broke out at Alexandria, soon spread through all the churches in Egypt and the other provinces. Constantine was now on the throne, endeavouring most earnestly to heal the cruel wounds inflicted on Christianity by the late persecution, and to provide by every means for its future peace and final prosperity. On hearing of the quarrel, he writes a letter, recommending a reconciliation, jointly addressed to Alexander and Arius. The letter begins thus: "I hear that the controversy originated in a certain passage of our law, which you, Alexander, proposed to your clergy, and concerning which you solicited their opinion," &c. Here the evidence for my assertion becomes more definite. From the Emperor's letter we learn that Alexander, having convoked his clergy, proposed to have their sentiments respecting a certain verse which connumerated the Father, the Word and the Holy Spirit, and which, as the Bishop thought, asserted their *unity*. Constantine does not specify the verse, but describes it as a "certain passage in our law," that is, in the law of the Christians or in the Christian Scriptures. He evidently thought it not safe to give a more specific designation of it; and he blames both the parties for bringing so dangerous a discussion before the public, adding, that it ought to be withheld by all means from the knowledge of popular assemblies, and confined in the sacred recesses of their own breasts: *Intra mentis nostræ penetralia continere debemus, nec eas facile in publicos*

*offerre conventus, nec auribus vulgi inconsulte committere.* The emperor, with all his authority, failed in his benevolent wishes to unite the discordant parties. The Nicene Creed was the consequence: and I now proceed to the evidence which that Creed itself affords, that the whole controversy turned on the erased text, now supposed to be spurious.

Eusebius, of Cæsarea, being a man of learning and of authority with the Emperor, had the honour of drawing up the creed which the assembly were to subscribe. It was literally thus: "We believe in one God, Father Almighty, the Creator of all things visible and invisible—in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Logos of God, God of God, Light of Light, Life of Life, only begotten Son, first born of every creature, born before all ages of God the Father, by whom all things were made; who for our salvation became flesh, and dwelt among men; who suffered and rose the third day; ascended to the Father, and is again about to return with glory, that he may judge the living and the dead—we believe also in one Holy Spirit, believing each of these to be and to subsist, the Father truly a Father, the Son truly a Son, the Holy Spirit truly a Holy Spirit; even as our Lord, when he commissioned his disciples to preach, said, 'Go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.'"

This was the Creed which was first proposed: amendments were moved to it, and, unfortunately, carried by a great majority of the assembly. The adopted changes serve to shew, that the Creed, as first proposed, was drawn up with great liberality and with consummate art. The first observation to be made is, that the proposed Creed contains a connumeration of the three heavenly witnesses, exactly as they are laid down by John—the Father, the Logos or Word, and the Holy Spirit; and in this appear the adroitness and liberality of the framer. For by preserving *the Word*, and not *the Son*, the person called upon to subscribe, was left at liberty to annex to the second person the sense which the Apostle himself gives to it, namely, the attributes of God personified, and imparted to the man

Jesus. In this sense, to say that "he was God of God," is to say no more than what John writes in the beginning of his Gospel. The apostles, but more frequently Philo, speak of the Logos as begotten or created in the Divine mind, and as the instrument of creating all other things.

In this light they considered *the Son* as synonymous with the Logos, and speak of Christ under that name without any regard to his nature as a *man*. But when, in his Gospel, John speaks of him *as the Son of God*, he means Jesus simply as a man, acting and suffering like other men, though endowed with the Logos of God, and consequently having a nature and existence infinitely remote from the nature and existence of God. From this view we might infer that Eusebius, the author of the Creed, was at heart, at this time at least, a *Sabellian*; that is, an *Unitarian*. At all events, he left the creed open for all Sabellians to subscribe it; and we find, in fact, that *Marcellus*, who was present in the Synod, and avowedly an Unitarian, did subscribe it. The close, indeed, is levelled against the Sabellians, who maintained the Father, the Word and the Holy Spirit to be but three different appellations of the same Being. "Believing each of these to be and to subsist, the Father truly a Father, the Son truly a Son, and the Holy Spirit truly a Holy Spirit." But the Sabellians might get over this by interpreting the Son as synonymous with the Logos, as stated above; or by following the Creed itself, which points to the words of our Lord at the end of Matthew, where the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are connumerated without implying an unity of essence: and it is but justice to Eusebius to notice, that he has not insisted on their unity, but confined himself to the spirit of our Lord's own words.

This was an ingenious artifice; but it was seen through and defeated. An amendment was proposed to substitute *the Son* for the Logos. This article was carried; and its adoption paved the way for the double nature of Christ as both God and man, and for the notion that, though one with the Father, he existed in person independently of the Father.

The Creed of Eusebius declined to

insist on the *miraculous birth* of Jesus as a necessary article of faith; nor has the high orthodox party proposed any amendment to supply the omission. This is a remarkable fact, which cannot be accounted for, but on the supposition, which I doubt not is the truth, that, at that early period, the Christian world in general were not yet prepared without abhorrence to regard a story so improbable and absurd in itself, so full of Heathenism, and so contrary to the tenour of the Christian Scriptures.

The immediate object of the Synod was to put to rest the controversy excited by Arius and his followers: yet the Creed of Eusebius is silent respecting it. This shews that the author was not in the number of the orthodox party, from whom the Arians had to expect no indulgence. Arius virtually denied the divinity of Christ, saying that he was not of the same substance with the Father, and that as he was begotten in time, there was a time when he did not exist. The omission in the proposed creed was supplied by an appendix, which condemned these and similar sentiments, and anathematized the author with his adherents from the Christian Church. Yet the orthodox party felt the utmost perplexity to give any colour of reason or consistency to the system which they opposed to the Arians. For if they asserted the divinity of the Son, and interpreted the clause, "And these three are one," as meaning one in essence, and yet maintained the Divine Unity, the distinctions of Father, Son and Holy Ghost were no other than *nominal*, and themselves real Unitarians. But if they asserted the divinity of the Son without asserting also his identity with the Father, they were thrown on the other horn of the dilemma, and liable to the charge of Polytheism. Of this we have a full proof in the example of Alexander, who, by asserting an unity in the three divine persons, incurred the immediate charge of Sabellianism. It is curious to see the adroitness with which they extricated themselves from this perplexing dilemma. They declined to affirm in express terms the unity of the Son with the Father; but invented a new epithet which, signifying an identity of essence, *implied* the unity which

they wished, but dared not, to affirm. The epithet thus invented is *ὁμοσιον*, and carries a tacit intimation against the Arians that the clause of the seventh verse, "And these three are one," means one in *nature* or *essence*, and not, as the Arians maintained, one in *consent* or *design*.

In this great council the Arians were defeated, Arius himself, and some of his leading adherents, being banished. They again, however, soon became the ascendant party; and A. D. 341, ninety-seven bishops, who disclaiming to be followers of Arius, though professing his sentiments, because they had received them in regular succession from the apostles, met at Antioch, and drew up a long declaration of faith. This declaration, as far as it bears on the subject before me, is to this effect: ΠΙΣΤΕΥΟΜΕΝ ΕΙΣ ἓΝΑ Θεον—ΕΙΣ ἓΝΑ Κυριον Ιησυν Χριστον—ΕΙΣ το Πνευμα το ἁγιον—ὡς εἶναι τῇ μεν ὑποστασει τρια, τῇ δε συμφωνιᾳ ἓν, that is, "We believe in one God—in one Lord Jesus Christ—in the Holy Ghost—so that they are three in person, and one in consent."

Here we clearly recognize the text of the three heavenly witnesses, inserted in his Epistle by the hand of John. For this text consists of three parts, namely, three persons—three persons bearing testimony—and these three are *one*, that is, one in testimony or consent. This creed implies the same number of parts—three in person, one in consent, *συμφωνια*. But if they are one in consent, then each of the three must have borne some testimony, and the testimony meant is found expressed in the words of the Apostle. The *συμφωνια ἓν* of the Arians, is opposed to the *σισια ἓν*, or the *ὁμοσιον*, of the orthodox: and both are founded on the apostolic clause, "These three are one," and both intended as explanatory of it. If any doubt remain on this question, it must be removed by recurring to the state of the argument between Abbot Joachim and Thomas Aquinas. This was in the thirteenth century, when the verse was restored, and its genuineness not called in question. Joachim was an Arian, and thus argued: "As nothing more than unity of testimony and consent can be meant by *tres unum sunt*, in the eighth verse, nothing more than unity of testimony



and consent is meant in the seventh." This is the very argument which the ninety-seven bishops used at Antioch.

Let us now take a brief retrospect of what has been already disclosed. Bengelius writes that a secret doctrine was introduced into the Christian Church in the second century, which caused the text of the three heavenly witnesses to be excluded from the copies of the New Testament used by the public. The same doctrine, according to Casaubon, rendered the ancients extremely cautious in teaching the Trinity. They trusted it only to the *faithful*; but withheld it, or declined to insist upon it, before the *uninitiated*. Catechumens, and even *infirm* Christians, were not entrusted with the knowledge of it. It was submitted only to those who were to be baptized, before their admission as members of the church, and after they had undergone a severe trial of forty days. At that ceremony all strangers were dismissed, and the doors closed; then, and not till then, this great mystery was recited. These facts are stated on the authority of Chrysostom, Jerome, Gregory Nazianzen and others, and the learned men who produce their testimonies, were themselves Trinitarians.

These are strange things, and must be accounted for. Now, readers, look back to my preceding papers, and you will perceive that they naturally follow from the facts there developed. The Apostle wrote the verse against certain impostors, who denied the simple humanity and divine mission of Christ. In conformity to a maxim in the law of Moses, that three witnesses were sufficient evidence, John divides this evidence into three testimonies, each affirming one and the same thing. The first learned converts from among the Heathens, being themselves strongly biassed in favour of the divinity of our Saviour, became eager to introduce that doctrine as the means of reconciling the Pagan world to the gospel; and to answer this end, they had only to allege those whom John cites in proof of the divine mission of Jesus, as witnesses for his divinity, and even his union with the Father. But this perversion, though not violent, was so obvious, that the authors could not conceal it, without concealing the verse

itself: and this is the true origin of the secret doctrine, said by Bengelius to have been introduced into the Christian Church; and the real cause of the great precaution, which was necessary to prevent its being detected and exposed.

The manner in which Bede quotes the verse is a remarkable confirmation of this inference. He quotes it not in its proper place; but puts in the room of it an anathema upon those men against whom John wrote it. After transposing the text, he cites it but in part, omitting whatever seemed likely to bring the true meaning of the Apostle to light; and the only comment he makes upon it, is the creed which prevails to this day respecting the two-fold nature of Christ. The early Unitarians understood the text in its proper sense; and these the orthodox party persecuted with deadly hatred. They stigmatized them as heresiarchs, as if their sentiments were then new; ascribed to them, as they did to Sabellius, opinions which were false and ridiculous, but which in reality were erroneous inferences drawn and ascribed to them by their adversaries; and, finally, they suffered to perish, or caused to be destroyed, all the writings of the Unitarians; so that not a single work has been permitted to come down to future ages, whereby we might now be able to discover the real state of things.

But the orthodox, while they agreed to persecute those who differed from them, quarrelled among themselves respecting the verse; and the disputes ensuing became, in the hands of God, the means of preserving it for ages, and in the end of restoring the truth. Alexander, Bishop of Alexandria, and Arius, one of his clergy, were the first to make it the subject of public discussion. The flames of controversy, which thus broke out in Egypt, soon spread with the fury of a mighty conflagration through all the provinces of the Roman empire. Constantine interposes, and endeavours to put them out, but in vain. He calls the text on which the Trinity was founded, "a certain passage of our law," without venturing to specify it more particularly. He reproves Alexander for his temerity in bringing the discussion before the world, and says that it ought to be

buried in the sacred recesses of their own bosoms. A general assembly of the clergy throughout Christendom was the consequence. Eusebius proposes a creed artfully drawn up, in which he connumerates the three heavenly witnesses, exactly as they are found in the text of John; but leaves the *unity* asserted in the last clause undefined; and thus lays it open not only for the Arian, but for the Unitarian, bishops, to subscribe it. But this creed was overruled, and a clause, with some other amendments, was introduced, which asserts the unity in the *Triad* to be *unity of essence*, and not *unity of consent*, as maintained by the followers of Arius. This, indeed, was not affirmed in express terms; but a new term was invented (*ὁμοουσιον*, *identity of essence*) that implies or inculcates this sense, merely to avoid, in the eyes of the world, running into Polytheism on one hand, or into Sabellianism on the other. The Arians, now defeated, again became triumphant, and soon after published a creed at Antioch, by which the Nicene was laid aside, and an unity of consent was substituted in the room of unity of essence, as the true meaning of the apostle. These great events took place from the beginning to the middle of the fourth century, about two hundred and fifty years after the death of John.

From this short view, these three conclusions necessarily follow: First, that the text of the three heavenly witnesses was known in an early age to all the learned among the Christians, who had the best copies of the New Testament, and probably the very autograph of the Apostle John, in their possession.—Secondly, that this text was taken away by the advocates of the divinity of Christ; because it sets aside that doctrine, and asserts his simple humanity.—Thirdly, that to supply the place of the verse thus suppressed, a creed asserting his divinity and equality with the Father, was formed and administered to the Christians at large, with all the solemnity of a sacrament, as the only means of securing and perpetuating the triumphs of the orthodox faith.

BEN DAVID.

SIR,

March 16, 1826.

IN the Monthly Repository for January last (pp. 29—32) is a letter from the Rev. William Adam, of Calcutta, (without date,) to the Rev. James Yates, of Birmingham, in answer to one from the latter to Mr. Adam, dated Jan. 8, 1825, by which it appears that the ground whereon to build the Unitarian Chapel and its appendages at Calcutta was bought, but that Mr. Adam had not at the time of his writing received either the means or authority for beginning the erection of the Chapel, or indeed of any plan having been forwarded to him. Considering the vast importance of the object contemplated—no less than a *hope* of conferring the greatest of possible blessings on (eventually) myriads of our fellow-creatures, I trust it will be deemed a pardonable impatience the anxious wish of learning, through the medium of your valuable Monthly Repository, Sir, that the necessary instructions, &c., have ere this been sent over to Mr. Adam, and that a beginning of the erection of the Chapel, &c., has been made, and is proceeding with all possible expedition, whilst deriving the incalculably great benefit of the personal aid of two such advocates to the Unitarian cause, as Rammohun Roy and Mr. Adam; reflecting, though it be a painful reflection, that the possession of these “treasures is but in earthen vessels,” which should stimulate to the most prompt exertions for accelerating the necessary means whilst blessed with such advantages, the which is so singularly striking as to admit (I trust without presumption) a belief of their being agents raised up by Heaven. How else can we view at this particular period the conversion of Mr. Adam from his long-confirmed belief in the doctrine of the Trinity to that of the sole Unity of God; and Rammohun Roy’s bursting forth from the depth of the grossest idolatry, which from his infancy he had been taught to revere, and which by the mere force of his own mighty mind he early learned to view with just abhorrence, and thence became an anxious searcher after divine truth, by which he was led to a close and critical examination of the Christian Scriptures after he had previously acquired a thorough knowledge of the

different languages necessary for elucidating the fullest evidence of their truth. A mind thus ardently bent on obtaining the pure revelations from heaven, and so perfectly free from prejudice and every religious bias of system and sectarian creed, and with abilities and strength of mind qualifying him for apprehending the subject of his investigation, and which for his *own* satisfaction and for benefiting his species, appears to have been the *sole* object of his arduous undertaking, sacrificing to its attainment the endearing ties of friendship, kindred and affection:—can the Christian public be justified in treating such a man with obloquy or neglect merely because the result of his patient, unbiassed examination of our Scriptures leads him to opinions, in some points, different from their own? Would it not be more consistent with a reverence for truth, the reading his works with due attention, and to consider whether such a character, so peculiarly novel, may not bespeak some high behest? At least, it ought to awaken a serious and candid perusal of his arguments in support of those opinions whereon he so decidedly grounds his *own faith*, as built on the fullest conviction of their being the doctrines of both the old and new dispensations, and which dispensations he feels no doubt in believing are revelations from heaven, thereby avowing himself a Christian.

Having but lately seen his (Rammohun Roy's) publication of "The Precepts of Jesus," and his "Appeals to the Christian Public," on the Rev. Dr. Marshman's censure of his compilation, and their controversy on the doctrines of revealed religion, in which the superiority of the compiler's scriptural knowledge over the Rev. Dr.'s studiously selected *little* but numerous texts of Scripture, and his systematic deductions therefrom, suggested to my imagination the following images, viz. that of the Rev. Dr. as a man of ingenuity and learning, long and sedulously occupied in close examination into, and picking from the eagle his small and minutest feathers, and with this *tiny* collection fancying himself possessed of the powers of that mighty bird, yet leaving to his opponent the eagle himself with his strong plumed pinions untouched, whereon he soars aloft to-

ward heaven, facing the blazing sun, casting thence a look of pity on the vain attempt to stop his progress or throw the shadow of a shade over his clear and luminous expositions.

That worthy and zealous advocate of Unitarianism at Madras, William Roberts's modest but anxious call for missionary aid from England, reminds me, as often as I think of him, of the request of the man in visionary appearance to Paul whilst at Troas (Acts xvi. 9): "There stood a man of Macedonia and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia and help us." Is there no Paul among *our* ranks ready to go over unto Madras to uphold and strengthen the feeble hands of such a faithful and zealous disciple as William Roberts, and who by age and infirmity is rendered nearly incapable of longer sustaining alone his honourable station? Yet without a successor, in case of his decease or greater incapacity, the valuable fruits of his extraordinary labours would fall blighted to the ground.

UNITARIAN.

SIR,  
MOST sincerely do I congratulate you and the public, on the liberality which the Inns of Court have displayed in abolishing the custom of requiring gentlemen, previously to being called to the Bar, to produce a certificate of their having partaken of the Lord's Supper according to the rites of the Church of England, and which has been taken notice of by your correspondent W. H., p. 39. Few, even among the youngest or the most enthusiastic of your readers, can hail this instance of the increasing liberality of the age with greater pleasure than I do; but while I rejoice at this omen of better times, I must not, as a Dissenter, forget that there is a barrier which the Legislature of my country has opposed to prevent persons having peculiar religious opinions from taking upon themselves certain offices of trust and confidence. The Test and Corporation Act still appears on our Statute Book as an existing law, and, as long as it remains unrepealed, should, I think, deter persons who entertain sentiments on religion different from those inculcated in the doctrines of the Church of En-



gland, from taking the Sacrament, as a means of obtaining any official situation. Far be it from me to entertain or to encourage in others a feeling of uncharitableness; I claim a brotherhood with all men. But is there no difference between being charitable and being lax in your opinions? I am charitable, because upon it depends my happiness, and the Christian religion tells me it is my duty. But I resign not, therefore, those opinions which I deem to be of importance; I sacrifice not them on the altar of worldly interest. I look upon the errors of others, whether in opinion or conduct, with an eye of charity, but I hold steadfastly those which to the best of my judgment I believe to be right, whatever be the consequence.

With some of the general observations of W. H. I agree, but there are others to which I should be very unwilling to give my assent. I agree with him in thinking that all Christian communities may adopt with equal propriety their own form of celebration, but I differ from him in opinion, that any sincere Christian can join any other denomination of the Christian community in their accustomed form of the administration of this rite. Does participating with a Calvinist, asks W. H., make me a disciple of Calvin, or with the Church of England, make me a Trinitarian? Certainly not. The participation in the Lord's Supper cannot alter my opinions. It cannot make me, who am an Unitarian, really a Trinitarian. But it may make the world think that my opinions on the subject are altered, and that I, who was an Unitarian, have become a Trinitarian, or that I am a hypocrite, and that, my opinions remaining the same, I have chosen to conform because conformity is my interest. I agree with W. H. in thinking that its requisites are brotherhood, benevolence and peace, and that it should make us disposed to embrace not only all Christians, but all men of every religion and of every country with the most heartfelt kindness. But I also think it should lead us to consider with the greatest seriousness, and to value to the utmost of their worth, the truths of that religion of which we thus make a public profession. "We have often had," says W. H., "to deplore the taunt and re-

viling manifested when gentlemen of true Dissenting principles and education have found it necessary, as a qualification for magisterial or other public duties, to submit to this test of Christianity." The questions that W. H. asks at the end of his letter shew that he does not disapprove of gentlemen taking this test of Christianity as a means of getting into office. Here W. H. and I must differ.

If Christianity be true, of which there can be no doubt, it not only must be most important to have a right understanding of its precepts and doctrines, but it must be most injurious to our characters and highly offensive to our Maker, that those precepts and doctrines should not have their utmost influence on our lives and conduct. Consequently, if Unitarianism be that which we consider to be, the true doctrine of the gospel, we should adhere to that belief though it may subject us to many inconveniences and be a bar to our entering upon offices which would afford us profit, and by which we fancy our sphere of usefulness might be extended. We should not by our conduct throw a discredit upon our religion, and give the world reason to believe that, though Unitarians from conviction in principle, we are no religionists, but at all times ready to abandon our faith, whenever it interferes with our interest.

Whether partaking of the Lord's Supper according to the rites of the Church of England does not imply even more than a tacit acknowledgment of the doctrine of the Trinity in Unity and Unity in Trinity, I will leave to any unprejudiced person to determine merely on referring to those parts of the Common Prayer Book relating to this subject.

Where do the gentlemen, whom W. H. sympathizes with, of true Dissenting principles and education, find the *necessity* of submitting to this test of Christianity (as he terms it) as a qualification for magisterial or other public duties? Does imperious necessity, which has no law, command them to take office? But if it does, is not an act passed every year to indemnify magistrates and other officers from the legal penalties of their discharging the duties of their station without qualifying? The same neces-

sity that W. H. would adduce as an excuse for these gentlemen, would equally be an excuse for any persons taking the Sacrament or signing the Thirty-nine Articles for the purpose of obtaining any official situation. I am not willing to enlarge on this subject myself, and endeavour to prove that this practice is wrong, but shall be content to refer to the writings of a man, whose character the more I contemplate the more I admire; whom, though unconnected with by any ties of relationship, I can only think of with sentiments of filial reverence and respect; who shed a lustre upon his own age, surpassed by none and equalled by few; who was not more distinguished for his virtues in private life than for his conscientious integrity in a public station; who, if he had chosen to sacrifice his conscientious scruples, might have enjoyed some of the highest honours in the Church—I mean the author of the Confessional, Archdeacon Blackburne. In his work I could find many passages to support my position, but the quotation is unnecessary. I refer with confidence to the name of the most venerable and excellent Lindsey, whose life may be the polar star to a Christian in the path of his duty. But, nay, to come more to our own circle, I could refer to a man of the present day and generation, whose spirit, like that of the immortal Locke, was too great for the University in which he had been educated, whose separation from the Church, whose total abandonment of its honours for conscientious motives, when they were almost within his reach, imparts to his name an honour which, though envied, cannot be diminished, and which even in him forms the highest object of our admiration.

These are instances of steady Christian conduct worthy of the apostolic age. May they influence the rising generation to come forward as the champions of a good cause, animated by the recollection that the race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, and by the hope of an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away!

A LAYMAN.

Sneed Park, near Bristol,

SIR,

March 17, 1826.

YOUR Manchester correspondent, "A Friend to Free Inquiry," (p. 83,) has a fair claim to my explaining in what sense I used the epithet *evangelical*. Perhaps if I had substituted *apostolical*, it might have been more unexceptionable; but as I could not be so far misunderstood as to lead any to attribute to me the yet popular notions on the subject of the salvation by Christ, and guarded my use of what I think the most expressive term by the expression "*what I may be allowed to call evangelical*," I have no regret that I employed it.

It cannot be necessary for any of your readers, that I should refer the word to its origin, and say that it corresponds with *gospel* when used as an adnoun; or that I should remind them that the import of *gospel* (godes spel), and of *evangelium*, *ευαγγελιον*, is *glad tidings*: but my justification rests upon it. My sentiments have become increasingly *evangelical*, by my feeling more and more the immense importance and value of the gospel as the glad tidings of salvation, not only by conveying hopes full of immortality and rescuing from the darkness of the grave and shedding light on the way of duty, but also as a dispensation of divine love to sinful man, of mercy to pardon, and grace to help in time of need. I review what I wrote on these subjects fourteen or fifteen years ago, with a cheering persuasion that I have little or nothing to unsay; and, as it respects *doctrine*, little even to add: but it is also with a fulness of heart and comprehensiveness of view which I did not then experience. The same expressions appear to me to mean much more, to have a greater force, a more extensive applicability to the wants and weaknesses of the children of error, sin and death. I feel more as I think the apostles must have done, when I meditate on the inestimable blessings of the *gracious message*, the *glad tidings*, the *gospel* of peace and pardon and everlasting life. And I see more clearly and more fully the wisdom and the mercy of the appointment which set forth Christ Jesus as the mercy-seat, and caused it to be sprinkled with his own blood. And partly indeed because I am less likely

to be misunderstood, but partly because I perceive more the vast comprehensiveness and importance of the grace of God by Christ, I can with more unreservedness of expression and of soul, declare that I glory in the cross of Christ.

My *opinions* on the subject are, I believe, on all points of moment, unchanged: but my *sentiments* (in which I include not only the *doctrines* but the associated *affections* of gratitude and love, of veneration and submission, of faith and hope, of contrition and consolation, the joyful anticipations those doctrines inspire of blessedness to man in this world and in another, the appreciation of the inestimable value of gospel blessings, and the desire to promote the extension of that knowledge which is life eternal) have, I trust, increasingly risen towards the only just standard, the spirit of the gospel, and of him in whom we have redemption through his blood, and the doctrines and representations of those who knew him on earth, and witnessed his humiliation and his triumphs, and who felt (not more than we should feel, for we alike share them) what is meant by "the fulness of the blessings of the gospel of Christ."

If the Manchester "friends" have not gone on in this course with me, they will smile at what they may deem enthusiasm or mysticism; but if they have, they will be satisfied with my meaning, if not with my use, of the epithet *evangelical*. L. C.

SIR,  
**P**ERMIT me to offer to your readers a few remarks on Mr. Jones' letter (p. 72) on Unbelievers joining Unitarian congregations. In the first place, I think the statements in that letter are exceedingly exaggerated, and likely to make a very unfair and unfavourable impression respecting us, on other Christians. "That Unbelievers not only join in our devotions, but take an active part in the management of the internal concerns of our churches," is, as far as I know, a matter of exceedingly rare occurrence. I have reason to believe that there is only one place of which this is at all true. Secondly, I wish Mr. Jones, and those who think along with him, would consider the remarks of your American

correspondent, (p. 79,) on Anti-Supernaturalists. I know that many, who have been charged with being Unbelievers, are of the opinions which your correspondent describes. To such a person I should be very unwilling to refuse the name of Christian, and so far from wishing for his absence from our religious assemblies, I should always be glad to join with him as a fellow-worshiper. But even with respect to more avowed Unbelievers, would it not be very improper to do any thing, which might prevent them from coming to our religious meetings, where they may have their devotional feelings excited, where they have the best chance of receiving instruction in the evidences of Christianity, of hearing judicious answers to their objections, of learning what are the real doctrines of the gospel, and thus having those difficulties which arise from erroneous views of Christianity, and which have had a great effect in producing scepticism in many minds, removed? Even if they should not be satisfied with the evidences of Christianity, they are almost certain of having their knowledge of its precepts increased, and their regard for its morality strengthened; and can we feel ourselves justified in any measures which will probably prevent such good effects as these? On these grounds I would not wish Unbelievers to withdraw from our religious services, and I cannot see how a pious and moral Deist is inconsistent in wishing regularly to join in worship in that place where he will find more of what agrees with his sentiments, and less of what differs from them, than among other bodies of Christians. So far from regarding this as any objection to our views of Christianity, I look upon their accordance with what may be learned from natural religion, as one evidence of their truth. If an Anti-Supernaturalist be a regular attendant on our worship, will he not justly feel himself called on to contribute to the support of the minister, from whom he derives moral and religious instruction, and will he not naturally and properly think himself entitled to exercise his judgment with respect to the qualifications of a religious instructor, and to give his vote on the election of a minister? To what part



of this conduct can any just objection be made? There is one passage in Mr. Jones' letter to which I still more strongly object; that in which he refers to Jews. To me it appears a very strong argument in favour of our views of Christianity, and our mode of worship, that, as a Jewish Rabbi once told me, ours are the only Christian churches which a Jew can attend without committing idolatry. To Unbelievers joining in our worship, for the reasons I have given, I think there is no valid objection. At the same time I feel sure that this is a much rarer occurrence than Mr. Jones' letter would lead your readers to imagine. With regard to an Unbeliever entering our pulpits, there is only one solitary instance of the circumstance happening. The individual to whom Mr. Jones alludes, a very amiable and excellent young man, resigned his situation as a minister, in consequence of the doubts he felt of the truth of Christianity. He has officiated since a few times on pressing emergencies, but it has been with reluctance on his own part; and the ministers and congregations in the neighbourhood, on becoming more fully acquainted with his sentiments, have resolved rather to have their chapels vacant for a Sunday than to ask him again. Now what is there in these circumstances to justify the emotion and alarm which Mr. Jones appears to feel? Nothing, in the opinion, at least, of, yours truly,

THOMAS CROMPTON HOLLAND.

SIR,  
THE best reply that can be given to your correspondent Mr. N. Jones (p. 72) is, in my judgment, to refer him to Mr. Belsham's excellent Letters to the Bishop of London, in Vindication of the Unitarians from a charge made against them, not dissimilar to that made by Mr. Jones. However good the motive and laudable the object Mr. J. may have in view, I would, as an individual, respectfully submit a few brief remarks on his communication.—It is the complaint, 1st, That the immense gulf between the Christian and Unbeliever is apparently annihilated *by the manner in which both characters are equally acknowledged in Unitarian congregations.*

2. That our places of public worship are frequented by Unbelievers, who not only join in our devotions, and listen to our ministers, but take an active part in the concerns of our churches, *and that they are, in some cases, the principal pecuniary supporters of our cause.*

3. That there may arise a just suspicion against that professedly Christian society in which these *opposites are united.*

4. That at least it is a reproach to the *faithful* members of such a society to join, without complaint, in public worship with Unbelievers.

Lastly. That injury is done to the Unitarian Christian's views of the gospel by having Unbelievers amongst them.

To maintain the first portion of the evil requires evidence, which, I trust, would be very difficult to collect, that Infidels are recognized in such a manner as to destroy all distinction between them and the Unitarian Christian. Let it be supposed, however, that such was the case; would that necessarily prove the faith of the Christian to be unstable or infirm? No *religious* sympathy could be justly imputed to the Christian because he received his unbelieving brother in the affectionate spirit of Jesus; and the better inference, I submit to you, must be drawn, that the sympathy sprung in the breast of the Infidel, (whom I would rather call Dissenter,) and that his presence furnished some ground for rejoicing that "he was not against us."

2. It must be devoutly hoped to be incredible, that Dissenters from Christianity frequent our places of worship, join in our devotions, take part in the concerns of our churches, and support, by pecuniary aid, the Unitarian cause. For the honour of human nature, if not for Christ's religion, such inconsistency cannot be supposed to exist. The worst motives could only be attributed to those who should *thus* join in public worship with believers (as they considered) in a lie, or in its author being an impostor, or even an enthusiast. For hypocrisy of such a die, a stigma would be wanting. It may not be unjustly assumed, if individuals suspected of a weak and doubting faith mix in our rites or aid our cause, that such persons are strug-

gling with their fainting conviction, and what they cannot make up in judgment, they desire to supply by humility and hope, endeavouring thus "to fear God and keep his commandments," as being the duty of man.

For the remaining portions of the evil I would not willingly obtrude on your valuable columns, having already referred, as a better answer than any in my power to give, to Mr. Belsham's publication. But I may be permitted to add a few general remarks. The evil, if such it is, or being such, if it really exists, I submit, Sir, raises a doubt whether it ought to be remedied. It belongs to the common prudence of congregations to invest their secular matters with long-tried servants to our holy faith. Suspicion ought not to attach to a whole body of Christians for exhibiting the "unity of the spirit in the bond of peace," in their hour of devotion; whereby those

"—— who came to scoff, remain to pray."

The complaint we can only make, as it appears to me, is the same in our own case, even as believers, that if sufficiently disposed, we are never sufficiently successful in supplicating the love and practice of truth and virtue from that throne of grace whence alone it is to be derived. While it can be no reproach to us if we "prefer one another in honour," nor can injury arise to the Unitarian tenets from the association of Dissenters (i.e. Unbelievers) in our public worship, if our church happens to be their selection. Such unbelief might be reasonably considered (if the term can be applied) of a very mild description, or it could have no attachment to our service. We may be satisfied that Infidelity, whatever its grade, will not receive encouragement either from our doctrines or our pastors. Such *opposites* cannot be united, though, like the rich and poor, they may meet together. Come, then, I should repeat to such as are heavy laden, (and the *philosophy of unbelief* is a load, a heavy load,) come ye to Jesus.

X.

**I**N a letter inserted in the last number of the Repository (p. 72) on the impropriety of the admission of

Deists to join in our religious services, by the Rev. Noah Jones, there is a spirit of religious intolerance and prejudice of which the writer cannot surely be aware. The tendency of it is dangerous. It has hitherto been one great and important advantage of Unitarian Christianity, that it has been free from creeds of human invention, and from *tests*, those most bigoted of all ingenious devices for the ensnaring of consciences, which result from the well-intentioned but narrow-minded zeal of sectarian Christians. Mr. Jones would have every person who joined our societies "examined whether he is a Christian." Now, who is to decide as to what is meant by the word Christian in this instance? Would Mr. Jones set up his own individual opinions as the *standard*, or the opinions of his religious society? The great privileges of these religious societies are, that they allow every one to form their own private and unbiassed opinions, that they assume dominion over no one's faith or conscience, that they recognize the right of free inquiry and of *individual decision* on all the great questions of eternal interest which subsist between a human being and his Creator. Is this privilege to be lightly or incautiously infringed? Are we, who boast to stand in the glorious liberty with which Christ has made us free, to come forwards presumptuously to decide on the *degree* of belief in our fellow-creatures which shall entitle them to the name of *Christian*? Do we not know that amongst ourselves, amongst our firmest believers, amongst any existing church, there never will be found uniformity on these subjects; that in any *number* there will be some who believe more, and some who believe less, some who are satisfied on greater, and some on smaller evidence, according to their capacities, their educations, their characters and circumstances; and are *we* to sit in judgment on them for this? It would, indeed, be an arrogant assumption of undelegated spiritual authority; it would be the first step towards the destruction of those noble principles of toleration and justice which have hitherto distinguished us as Christian Reformers, and which are the great security of our religious liberties. But Mr. Jones will say it is not with the

difference of opinions between Christians, but with the introduction of Deists into our assemblies, that he would interfere; it is those who *disbelieve* in the evidences of Christianity, and yet join in our Christian worship, whom he would exclude from amongst us, as hypocritical in their conduct, and disgraceful to our community. Let us consider the circumstances before we reject them. Here are a number of persons who believe in *God*, in his attributes of wisdom, goodness and love, who are desirous of worshipping him and obeying him, many of whom study his attributes as revealed in the New Testament, and profess to take the *moral precepts* of our Saviour as the guide of their lives, but they *disbelieve*, or cannot view in the same light we do, the evidences of Christianity, and above all, the miracles. I say, they *cannot* believe them, because there is no doubt, as most of them are sincere and virtuous persons, they would be glad to have their minds settled, and their anxiety relieved on these points; we may, perhaps, also, without conceding too much, take it for granted, that some of them are desirous to hear these difficulties discussed, and to have farther opportunities of considering their principles or rectifying their opinions; they, therefore, join our worship as less opposed to their own views than any other; they feel that they have the same practical duties to perform that we have, the same temptations to resist, the same God to serve; the benevolent and amiable light in which we contemplate the Deity, coincides with their natural convictions, and they come to us to seek moral strength for their virtue, and his guidance and blessing on their endeavours to improve. Will it be wise, will it be benevolent in us to exclude them from, perhaps, the *only* opportunity they have of gaining these advantages, and of hearing the truth as it is in Jesus? Will it be a proof of wisdom, instead of preaching to those who require to be convinced, to confine our instruction to those alone who need no enlightening, whose principles have long been confirmed? If we may possibly be the means of giving farther light or comfort to but one fellow-creature, shall we close our doors on the oppor-

tunity; or, even should this not be the case, shall we refuse to any one the liberty of worshipping God as he pleases? Mr. Jones says he shall be told "we cannot prevent any person, whatever may be his principles, from uniting in our worship." Is he sincere? Is he conscientious? Why should we prevent him? Do we not believe that if virtuous and true to his convictions, *whatever* those are, he will be acceptable to his Maker now, and the heir of eternal life hereafter? May he not very possibly be our companion in future, and shall we shun him as a disgrace to us in this life? We do not worship our Saviour; then, why cannot we join our worship with the worshiper of the same Deity? Were not the divine mission of our Saviour, his life, his death, his sufferings, his resurrection, his precepts, all designed to lead us to *God*, all evidences of *his* power, all proofs of *his* love? Did he ever teach us to rest in himself as an object of adoration? Did he ever permit us to despise our fellow-beings? Was not our Saviour himself the companion of publicans and sinners and unbelievers, and shall we be following his example, or acting upon his spirit, when we say to our brethren, for an involuntary difference of opinion, "Stand aside, for we are holier than you"? No, the spirit of Christianity is an enlarged, a benevolent spirit, which fears no imaginary contamination, and can extend the right hand of fellowship to every sincere and virtuous man, believer or unbeliever, and will not cut off from its sympathy and compassionate attentions, even the profligate and the wretched. Let us then set the example of a true, an *universal* toleration—let us receive every one of every denomination to our churches, however dark in faith, however miserable in unbelief, however bigoted in opinion. It has been said, "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye," and we must first abjure our own best and most sacred principles before we can attempt to cast them out. It may be painful to have aspersions on our reputation, or disagreeable to some to be associated with sceptics, but is it not of *far* more consequence to approve ourselves to our own consciences and hearts, and to act kindly and libe-



rally to others? Is it not of far more consequence to preserve uninjured that noble and wise *toleration* for which our ancestors seceded from a corrupt church, and which they purchased with the sacrifice of their comforts and their lives, than for the shadow of a name to give up the substantial blessings of independence and personal freedom in our spiritual concerns? But it will not be; and all such attempts, from a well-intended but mistaken zeal will only serve to ascertain more clearly the value of those privileges, and to place in a stronger and more interesting point of view the noble and Christian nature of that unlimited extension of the blessings we ourselves possess, which always has been, and we fervently trust always will be, our distinguishing characteristic.

AN UNITARIAN CHRISTIAN.

*On the Proposal to exclude Unbelievers from Christian Churches.*

Thou comest in such a questionable shape

That I will speak to thee. Oh! answer me;

Let me not burst in ignorance.

SHAKESPEARE.

*City Road,*

*March 20, 1826.*

SIR,

THE liberal and enlightened Dissenters, the friends of free inquiry and general liberty, must feel some concern, so far as relates to the individual writer, at the curious and singular communication from Mr. Noah Jones in your Repository for February last, (p. 72,) on the subject of Unbelievers subscribing to and being members of Unitarian congregations. The sentiments it contains may render it deserving of notice, not less from the pharisaical self-complacency it displays, than from the dogmatical and illiberal spirit which pervades the style of it throughout. Perhaps the correctness of his statements may be allowed to be doubtful, but he admits the fact to be "notorious"—"considers it as a very great evil"—as a want of "modesty in the sight of men"—and therefore is earnestly desirous for "the adoption of some adequate remedy" for "removing this stigma"—for the very cogent

reason—lest "our orthodox opponents" should "question the sincerity of our faith, and condemn us as imbued with the spirit of infidelity"!\*

Is not the measure which Mr. J. would seem to suggest a kind of persecution for opinion? And does "the genuine spirit of Christianity" either dictate or sanction such conduct in its teachers? I should wish to avoid arguing unfairly, but does not the tenor of Mr. J.'s observations seem to indicate, that he attaches great merit to mere opinion or belief? On what grounds does he associate moral depravity with an assent of the mind, which must be the necessary result of evidence? He confesses that he has "not always been an Unitarian," and has he ever noticed carefully the process by which he has been led to change or to form his own opinion? What appeared to him to be the truth at one time, has he not believed to be not such afterwards? Why then presume to make his present opinions the standard by which must be measured the correctness as well as the moral purity of others? Had he acquainted himself with that kind of philosophy so ably and successfully taught by Hobbes, Locke, Hartley, Priestley, Stewart, and recently with singular perspicuity by the author of "Essays on the Formation, &c., of Opinion," he might have learned to express himself with "more modesty in the sight of men." These philosophers teach us, that our opinions originate in sensations which are impressed upon the mind by external objects, though variously modified by association and other circumstances afterwards; and if opinions be the necessary result of such impressions, by what process of ratiocination will Mr. J. attempt to prove the immorality of entertaining them?

Every day's observation must convince us that the nature of things is such, that it was not the intention of

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\* Why do modern controversialists use the terms Infidel and Infidelity instead of Unbeliever and Unbelief? Would it not be more candid to adopt the latter, inasmuch as they do not convey the idea of any thing odious or reprehensible? Dr. Aikin has very accurately discriminated the difference in his Essays.

the Creator that all men should see the same objects exactly in the same point of view, and consequently they are unavoidably led to form different conclusions; but may not the opinions of the Unbeliever be the result of as diligent, candid, honest and sincere investigation, as those believed to be true by the Christian? Is it not within the range of probability, that from the evidence which strikes his mind, his conclusions may be as correct? Such an assumption surely is not unfair; why then should this new reformer presume to stigmatize him by a reproachful epithet, and hold him up to notice as an unworthy member of any society? Is he aware of the consequences of his own conduct? If he be really a lover of truth and virtue, are we not justified in asking how such "active, efficient and highly respected members of Unitarian churches," can "disturb his feelings" or be "injurious to his interests"—and why he should deem the "appearance" of any moral man in an Unitarian congregation an "injustice"? Is this "the genuine spirit of Christianity" which he states to be so "incompatible with the spirit of Infidelity"? Is this his all-sufficient reason for excluding an Unbeliever from religious intercourse, and ordering him, "in a manner that shall be attended to," to "depart in peace"? Would not he have "exhibited more modesty in the sight of men," had he acquired more correct notions of Christian liberty and charity before he threw out his illiberal and unchristian insinuations against men who are as sincere and virtuous as they are benevolent and intelligent? In comparison with a society of men acting upon such narrow notions of "the genuine spirit of Christianity" as Mr. J. seems to entertain, how much superior would be his "curious sort of Christian church, consisting of a mixed assemblage of Christian believers and anti-christian Deists, Jews and Mahometans"!

Mr. J. asserts, that "if there be two things in nature utterly incompatible with each other, they are the genuine spirit of Christianity and the spirit of Infidelity." But has he not here advanced a very questionable position? Can he prove it to be truth?

And having made such a bold and unqualified assertion, ought he not to demonstrate the fact by exhibiting a just as well as ample detail of its effects? If he possess the requisite information, (which if I doubt, I trust he will not be offended,) may not a reasonable hope be indulged that his diffidence will not prevent his displaying the extent of his knowledge and the full force of his ability? And from the modest mode in which he has made the attack, is it not his duty to do so? But is it not possible that the vivid picture of a modern Infidel conjured up by the fervid imagination and portrayed by the masterly pencil of Robert Hall, may have served as a model for Mr. J., as it has done for many others? However, who acknowledges the picture to be just? Has any intelligent person, who has seen much of human life and who has known and associated with Freethinkers and Unbelievers, ever found them to be the avoidable beings, the immoral monsters, which some theoretical Christians and professed believers have represented them to be? On the contrary, are not Infidels possessing such base and terrific qualities the merely ideal creatures of fancy—men of paper, set up with the view to be beaten down by these accomplished combatants, and in order to evince with what facility they can obtain a victory in the pulpit? If such be not the true state of the case, will Mr. J. condescend to prove it to be otherwise?

"If we have any concern," says Mr. J., "for the reputation of our Christianity, it greatly behoves us to look to ourselves in this matter, and to remove this reproach from us." But what reproach? And what is Mr. J.'s Christianity? Is it accordant with the Christianity that Jesus taught? If so, whence does he derive his reasons, and from what instances in the conduct or instructions of his "blessed Master and his apostles" to countenance such "a line of separation" as he seems so anxious to effect? Where, indeed, is that "immense gulf which subsists between the Christian and the Unbeliever," and which he professes to have "seen with sorrow"? Jesus appears to have been "no respecter of persons;" for were not Jews and

Gentiles, Pharisees and Sadducees, Publicans and Sinners, indiscriminately the objects of his benevolent attention and sollecitude? Can a single instance be adduced where he was so exclusively squeamish or delicately particular in the choice of his associates as it seems that Mr. J. is desirous that our modern Unitarians should be? He deemed it to be of more importance to impress upon his followers that they would be known to be his disciples "if they loved one another," and therefore did he not inculcate that admirable doctrine that all men are brethren, the children of the same Almighty Father? He was indeed modest and humble and benevolent and conciliating; but what would have been thought of his doctrine had he acted upon such notions as those cherished by Mr. J.? Having declared that he was "come not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance," what would have been the probable effect of his preaching had he exhibited any of the vanity or haughty self-sufficiency which characterize the conduct of but too many who profess, in these enlightened days, to be his most rigid followers? Are not these latter too much disposed to imitate the Pharisees of old with their Stand off, for I am holier than thou? Will Mr. J. deny that this is "the genuine spirit" of their Christianity? And if it cannot be denied that it is, ought not such believers to suspend their "sorrow" at the presence of Unbelievers, and to abstain from stigmatizing and reproaching them with "injustice," or want of "modesty in the sight of men"? If such men are really sincere and serious in their "concern for the reputation" of their Christianity, ought they not to shew by their candour, liberality and kindness, that it will be no discredit for Infidels to associate with them?

If "Jehovah dwelleth not in temples made with hands—and heaven is his throne and earth is his footstool," how arrogant and indeed ridiculous is the attempt to inculcate the idea that the presence of Unbelievers in an Unitarian church, is an "injustice" and a "reproach"! Is not such a notion utterly discordant with the practice and instructions of Jesus himself? Does not the whole tenor

of them prove that he deemed religion a personal concern between God and his creature man, consisting in beneficent actions and unity of moral feeling, rather than in uniformity or correctness of opinion? And was not the Being whom he worshiped and whom he taught others to worship, that God whom he designates as a "spirit," and the true worshipers those who "worship him in spirit and in truth"? Did he not himself worship this Spirit, and moreover call upon Jews and Gentiles to pay homage to the same Omnipotent Jehovah, the God of Israel—the "Father of all in every age, in every clime adored"? Were not the Jews Deists? And in what then consists the impropriety of a modern Unbeliever worshipping the God of Jesus? Are the Jews the irreligious and hateful beings which some modern divines would have Unbelievers to be thought to be? Do not the same moral feelings exist, and the same moral motives operate, now as in the days of Jesus? Are there no good Jews and Samaritans too in our times ready to do good to a fellow-creature in distress, though the priest and the levite may be disposed to pass by on the other side, because his creed may not be precisely of their dimensions? Jesus taught a morality which was pure, benevolent, liberal and philanthropic: what a pity it is that some who profess to be the teachers of his doctrine seem to know so little of his lessons, and to have imbibed so small a portion of his kind and courteous spirit!

But Mr. J. seems desirous to have "a confession" as a test to discriminate his true followers from Unbelievers! A test among Rational Dissenters! and merely because ignorance and bigotry may chance to say that his profession of religion is "cowardly Infidelity"! What have been the consequences of religious tests? Has not the invariable effect been to make men hypocrites and knaves? And are knaves and hypocrites to be preferred as the "subscribers to and members of Unitarian congregations," to "active, efficient and highly-respectable" men? To what pitiable straits is bigotry sometimes reduced! If in our common intercourse with our fellow-men we were governed by a regard to precise



similarity of creed, how little good, indeed, would be effected in the world! The Deity made man a social being, and has so constituted him that he is obliged to seek for happiness in social union; but does he not look for it in the unity and consistency of moral feeling in his friends and associates, rather than in the uniformity of their religious or political opinions? What indeed has been the occasion of so much discord and unhappiness among mankind as the unwise and unjust attempts to impose restraints upon freedom of inquiry in religious matters, and to stigmatize and degrade men for differing in opinion? I cannot indulge the uncandid idea that it is Mr. J.'s object to throw the torch of discord among Dissenters, but has not his conduct the tendency to excite prejudice and direct the force of bigotry against some "highly-respectable" men? Am I mistaken in such inference? If I am, I shall be happy to know and to acknowledge my error; but is there one syllable in his paper that evinces the least attention to Christian charity?

Should a man make "a confession of Christ," Mr. J. is willing to be his associate, and to allow him all "the privileges" of a "society of Christians." If he be a Gardiner, a Bonner, or a Horsley, he will give him the "right hand of fellowship;" but should he be a Hobbes, Anthony Collins, the friend of Locke, Voltaire, the intrepid advocate of Calas, a Hume, or a Dr. Franklin,\* he must

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\* Happily in former days the writer of this was one of those young men who attended upon the Lectures of Dr. Priestley. In one of them the subject led him to name the most eminent of the Unbelievers, among whom he particularly dwelt upon Mr. Hobbes and Dr. Franklin. The former he described as one of the most amiable of men, distinguished for the variety as well as the freedom of his philosophical inquiries, and the first person who had given any thing like a rational view of the philosophy of the human mind and the doctrine of philosophical necessity. The latter he stated to be his particular friend, but an Unbeliever with whom he had frequently talked on the evidences of Christianity; and being anxious that a person whom

he excluded from Unitarian society, and told, "in a manner that shall be attended to," to "depart in peace"! Is this the modern Unitarian Christianity which this new reformer wishes to introduce? Have Middleton, Lardner, Jebb, Priestley and Wakefield lived and laboured in vain? Or are they unknown to Mr. J.? Thanks be to Heaven! we have still remaining among us a few of their disciples, who are imbued with the same noble and philanthropic spirit! We have yet Belsham and Aspland and Fox, and a few others, who, fearless of whatever our orthodox or heterodox "opponents" may think or say on the subject of "cowardly Infidelity," will resolutely and perseveringly assert the rights of conscience, and maintain "the genuine spirit" of religious liberty. How much do we owe to these "highly-respectable men" for their efforts to expose the baneful effects of bigotry and intolerance!

Wherever the human mind has been permitted to exercise its powers without restraint, the result has been generally conducive to human happiness and improvement. The advocates of error and absurdity have often unintentionally co-operated in furthering this important purpose, for they have often been the cause of investigations which have eventually led to the discovery of truth. In this light may we not consider that Mr. J.'s communication may prove advantageous, inasmuch as it may induce the present genera-

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he so highly valued should become a Christian, he presented him with Hartley's Observations on Man. "But," said the good Dr. P., "I believe he never found time to read the work, and died an Unbeliever. He, however, did a great deal of good to his fellow-creatures, and was one of the great instruments of Providence in establishing that free government for our brethren in America which is likely to produce so much happiness to mankind. I believe I shall meet him again in another and a better world." Little did Dr. P. think then, that he should have so soon to "depart in peace" to this sanctuary of freedom!

\* See Dr. Priestley's and Mr. Belsham's Sermons on Free Inquiry; Mr. Aspland's on Religious Liberty; and Mr. Fox's on the Conduct to be observed towards Deists, &c.

tion of Dissenters to inquire more minutely into the object and causes of their religious association? And will not such discussions be ultimately beneficial to their interests from their bringing more particularly into notice the arguments in favour of the great principles of civil and religious liberty? Has not the unbounded freedom of inquiry exercised on these interesting topics by Jebb, Priestley and Robert Robinson, with the knowledge they diffused, proved an incalculable benefit to the world? How much have they diminished the mass of prejudice and bigotry, though some of them suffered so much from their effects! They were not intimidated from pursuing a course which proved that they truly possessed and cherished "the genuine spirit of Christianity," and they were regardless of any thing that their bigoted and "orthodox opponents" might say about "the sincerity of their faith," provided they advanced the interests of truth, and promoted the happiness of their fellow-creatures. After all that Mr. J. has said, will it be deemed any impropriety or want of modesty to say to him, "Go thou and do likewise"?

THEOPHILUS.

\* "I would," said the excellent Bishop Shipley, "as soon murder a man for his estate as persecute him for his religious opinions;" and it is to be wished that such a feeling were common to all "bishops, priests and deacons." Let Dissenters beware lest they permit the "demon of discord" to be introduced into their societies. When the rage of bigotry is once excited, it is not very easily repressed, and history abounds with its cruelties and persecutions. Had Mr. J. seen the direful effects of its operation, which the writer of this saw, in 1791, in the Riots at Birmingham, he would have learned a painful lesson that might not have been unuseful. Was it not on Mr. J.'s principle that Mr. Frend was expelled the University of Cambridge? Was not he deemed an Infidel, so far as the professed believers of that place were concerned? Mr. J.'s doctrine may do among the Monks of Salamanca or the Jesuits of Austria, but not for the Dissenters of Britain!

On the Moral and Christian Use of the Lord's Supper.

"Conform or not conform? — That is the question."

SIR,

THE ordinance of the Lord's Supper has frequently been a subject of discussion in the pages of the Repository, and various are the opinions which have been expressed as to its nature, its design and tendency; but, amidst all the liberty of speech with which you have indulged your correspondents, I never yet recollect that any individual, except W. H., (p. 39,) has considered it as in any degree "analogous to the pipe of peace smoked in the wigwam of the North American savages." Could our Missionaries be persuaded to take a hint from your correspondent, and whenever they went to preach among the Heathen, or those who have not received the gospel in its purity, would they take care to be provided with a considerable quantity of bread and wine, they might obtain many introductions, and would doubtless gain many proselytes, where they now meet with little more than hatred and opposition. But Unitarian Missionaries are not the only men that may be essentially benefited by your correspondent's remarks. He has discovered, that he can satisfy the Calvinistic inquisitor, and answer his questions in such a manner as will afford him admission to the table of the elect; nay, that he can even sit, or rather I should say kneel, before the "holy table" of the church, and participate in a service which is purely Trinitarian, and of which the worship of Christ forms an important part, without being either a Churchman or a Calvinist! Listen, ye tender consciences, and be comforted.—There is still another class of men, and if I mistake not they are the gentlemen for whom your correspondent manifests the greatest concern, who may be signally benefited by W. H.'s most liberal indulgence. "We have often had to witness," says he, p. 40, "and deplore the taunt and reviling manifested when gentlemen of true Dissenting principles and education have found it necessary, as a qualification for magisterial or other public duties,

to submit to this test of Christianity," when imposed by a priest according to law. And no doubt, Sir, it is a very hard thing for "gentlemen of true Dissenting principles" to be censured and ridiculed for merely participating in a service which is directly opposed to the dictates of their consciences. Perhaps W. H. is of opinion that the man who kneels before the "holy altar;" who has to say "Amen," at the conclusion of the Nicene Creed; and who has to say or to sing, "O Lord, the only-begotten Son Jesus Christ; O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us;" is sufficiently punished by the restless monitor within him, if he believes that "to us Christians there is but ONE GOD THE FATHER," without any reproof from his narrow-minded Unitarian friends. Be it so; on this supposition we are agreed. But, Sir, I find on reading a little farther, that W. H.'s disapprobation of the "taunt and reviling" originates in a different cause. Our Lord, he informs us, did not refuse to "sit with the Pharisee at meat;" and yet he was not made a Pharisee. The danger, you must be aware, was quite on the other side; it was far more likely that the Pharisee would become a Christian, than that Christ would sacrifice his principles, or be in the least degree likely to be led astray by men whom he was sent to instruct and redeem. Perhaps the "gentlemen of true Dissenting principles" who, in order to become magistrates, join in "the order of the holy communion," as by law established, may be thinking of the impression they will, by this means, be able to produce in favour of pure Christianity upon the minds of their Trinitarian friends; perhaps it is thus they think they can best display "the moral and Christian use of the Lord's Supper;" and most likely they avail themselves of the opportunity afforded them to heal the sick, to instruct the ignorant, and to bring them to a knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus Christ. Such, at least we are told, was the conduct of our Lord when he sat down to the table of the Pharisee. We do not, indeed, read that he listened to or joined in a Trinitarian prayer, much

less that he made the hospitality of the Pharisee a stepping-stone to worldly honour and distinction; though, to serve your correspondent's purpose, the sacred historians ought to have been particular in mentioning the circumstance, had it actually happened.

Your correspondent sometimes expresses himself in a manner which renders it rather difficult to comprehend his meaning. After professing to avoid "the adoration of the host adopted by the Catholic Church, the creeds and confessions of faith attached unto the Supper of our Lord by many of the modern and reformed sects, and the 'order of the holy communion,' as by law established;" he observes, "I would briefly inquire into that view of the subject which seems now to limit the celebration to the professed members of a particular society, as an avowal of the tenets there propagated, or a test of church membership therewith connected." Now, after the Catholics, the Established Church, and many of the modern and reformed sects have been excluded, what we are to understand by "a particular society," the "there" or the "therewith," I am rather at a loss to comprehend. Nor does the following passage diminish the difficulty: "May not any sincere Christian, if equally well-informed, join with equal satisfaction or with equal propriety, any other denomination of the Christian community into which the great body of the Church is divided, in the accustomed form of the administration of this rite belonging to each?" If the writer means that every Christian has a right to celebrate the ordinance of the Lord's Supper with those views and in that manner which he believes to be most consistent with the instructions of Christ, there is nothing particularly new in the information; but, if he means that, as a Unitarian, he can partake of the Lord's Supper with any other denomination of professing Christians, how would he be able to avoid "the adoration of the host, the order of the holy communion," and "the creeds and confessions" of Trinitarian Dissenters? I am almost disposed to conjecture that W. H. does not think it ought to be supposed that any profession of religion is made by



those who engage in the observance of the Lord's Supper. But whatever may be his sentiments on the subject, it never has been considered in this light, nor is it at present by professing Christians in general. The articles and creeds by which different denominations are distinguished manifest their spirit and influence, if they are not directly inculcated in the various forms of administering the ordinance which have been adopted in the Christian church. If, indeed, it were possible for a form of service to be devised which would meet with the approbation of all professing Christians, nothing would be more despicable than the spirit of illiberality which would prevent our sitting down together at the table of our Lord. But this is by no means the case; and yet with all our conflicting opinions, your correspondent would have the Unitarians and Dissenters in general to participate in "the order of the holy communion" and to join in the worship of Christ; and by parity of reasoning he would have the Churchman to join in "the adoration of the host," and all the superstitions and ceremonies of the Catholic communion. What has been usually called the "*Test Act*," would impose no test upon him; and all the anxiety which has been manifested by Dissenters to be freed from the odious burden, he would regard as useless and unnecessary. It is true, he observes, "it is not my intention to vindicate, much less to support, the measures of our governors in this case of arbitrary enactment." But why "arbitrary enactment" if "gentlemen of *true Dissenting principles*," can so easily submit to the test? It is merely "*a badge of Christian fellowship*;" it is only "*analogous to the pipe of peace*!" Unfortunately, Sir, it has not been so considered either by Catholics or Protestant Dissenters from the time of Charles II. even until now. The man whose non-conformity is rather burdensome to him, and who is especially sorry for those who are excluded by the "*Test and Corporation Acts*" from the rights and privileges which justly belong to all the citizens of a free country, may wish to persuade himself and the world, that it would be far better at once to accept the *pipe of peace*,

than to be continually petitioning Parliament for the removal of an enactment which, after all, is but a trifling "*encroachment to a liberally-informed mind*." What if our forefathers thought differently on the subject; we live in a more liberal and enlightened age; and as we increase in knowledge, surely it is only reasonable that we should increase in power!

Whether your correspondent is justified in adducing the name of Milton as a recommendation to the sentiments which he has expressed with regard to the Lord's Supper, I have not yet been able to ascertain; but I remember being particularly struck with a passage from his works, (which is not very foreign to the subject we are considering,) quoted by a man who, for the sake of a good conscience, quitted his preferment in the Established Church, and bade adieu to the most flattering prospects of temporal honour and distinction. How far the passage to which I allude will contribute to W. H.'s testimony to Milton's opinion, I shall not presume to judge, but it appears to me to be worthy of his serious consideration. It appears that the illustrious poet was intended by his parents and friends for the Church; but when he arrived at maturity, and perceived what tyranny had invaded the Church, he relinquished all intention of entering into its service. "*Perceiving*," said he, "that he who would take *orders* must subscribe slave, and take an oath withal, which, unless he took with a conscience that would retch, he must either straight perjure or split his faith; I thought it better to prefer a blameless silence before the sacred office of speaking, bought and begun with *servitude and forswearing*."

A PROTESTANT DISSENTER.

SIR,

March 15, 1826.

THE following concluding paragraph of a Review of the "*Missionary Life and Labours of Richard Wright*," is extracted from the last number of the "*Christian Examiner*,"\* published at Boston, U. S. I

\* A work which ought to be better known than it is to the English Uni-

send it to the Monthly Repository, not only as it is interesting to the English Unitarian to know the sentiments of his American brethren on a point which was much discussed here, but also in the hope that the attention of the Committee of the "British and Foreign Unitarian Association" may be directed to the wish of the American Reviewer, for an "increased intercourse" between the Unitarians of the respective nations. Certainly, to use his words, "we need to be better acquainted with each other. We need to enlighten and aid each other." Events seem to promise that so desirable a consummation may now be accomplished. As if in furtherance of it, a Unitarian Association, similar in objects to our own, started into existence in America within one day of that which saw the establishment of the "British and Foreign Unitarian Association." May each Society emulate the other in good works, and in promoting on both sides the Atlantic a spirit of Christian fellowship, cemented by the common bond of truth!

"For ourselves, we believe the measure\* would have been of doubtful issue at best, and are satisfied that the final decision was right. Yet we should rejoice to see some of our foreign brethren amongst us, and think it desirable that the bonds of fellowship should be more nearly drawn, and a better intercourse maintained. It would be a mutual benefit to us and to them. We do not speculate together on all points, and probably the majority of believers in this country differ considerably, in many of their views of the Christian doctrine, from the majority in Great Britain. We have not brought ourselves to adopt, as part of our own faith, much less to insist upon, as essential parts of our system, some of those doctrines which are so obnoxious in England, which are possibly no less obnoxious here, and which go to form in the eyes of the public such a collection of odious tenets, as we should think burden sufficient to sink any

tarian. It may be obtained regularly through a London bookseller.

\* Mr. Wright's mission to the United States, which at one time was seriously meditated.

cause. We give to the word Unitarian a wider and more generous acceptance, and, we confess, should have been more thoroughly pleased with the account of Mr. Wright's labours, if he had not sometimes brought to our mind, that his definition of Unitarianism excludes many whom we are proud to call brethren, and embraces views of doctrinal subjects to which we should give tardy and hesitating assent. But this makes us only the more desirous of increased intercourse. We need to be better acquainted with each other. We need to enlighten and aid each other. The English and American churches are toiling together in one vast work; and though they see not all things alike, nor all things perfectly, this should be no bar to their union—for it is equally the boast of each, that they believe there is 'more light yet to break forth from God's word,' and their desire and prayer to be instrumental in advancing it. Let others separate, in jealousy or in bigotry. Let *these* come together in fellowship, and not doubt that this will help them to come nearer in faith. The liberal spirit of our friends abroad we gratefully acknowledge, and the interest which they have taken in what relates to the cause of truth and improvement in this country. We cordially reciprocate their kindness, and shall rejoice in the prospect of better mutual acquaintance, and mutual aid and encouragement in common objects."

SIR,

I PERCEIVE that the unfortunate Unitarians are doomed to endure the Poet-Laureate's hatred and scorn; whether it be that he was once suspected of being of their persuasion, or that their parliamentary leader, Mr. W. Smith, once quoted in the House of Commons, a passage from "Wat Tyler," (which the jealous Laureate will allow no one to praise but himself,) I leave undetermined. In his reply to Mr. Butler, just published under the title of *Vindiciæ Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ*, he indulges in the following reminiscence in order to shew the futility of the argument, that because "the word has not been used—therefore the thing itself cannot have been intended." — "The

argument reminds me of a most reprehensible artifice practised by the Socinians not many years ago, and reported, as worthy of imitation, in one of those journals which are open for every thing that is mischievous." (The Laureate refers probably to the *Examiner*.) "They offered a reward to a set of school-boys for any one who should find the word Trinity in the Bible; and this was represented as an ingenious and praiseworthy device for leading the boys to infer that the doctrine is unscriptural. An Infidel might just as fairly invite them to look in the same place for the word Christianity, and argue, with equal reason, that Christianity is a fable, because there is no such word either in the Old Testament or in the New!" (Pp. 230, 231.) Passing by the fallacy that lurks in the Laureate's simile, which is absolutely good for nothing unless he can find a word or words tantamount to Trinity in the Bible, and leaving him to the quiet use of the "ill-mannered" term "Socinians," which he knows well enough is no longer appropriate, but which he knows equally well is offensive,—let me "remind" this eager polemic that he founders in his fact. The reward was not offered by the Unitarians, but by an individual, an Unitarian Churchman, who was regularly educated at one of our Universities, and never joined any Unitarian congregation, but on the contrary has always frequented the worship of the Church of England.

Let the Laureate inform himself better before he becomes again the accuser of the Unitarians; and it would be well that he should moderate his temper and soften his language, if he would really distinguish himself from "J. M., Vicar Apostolic," and the tribe of polemics, whose "words are sharp swords," and above all, if he would convince the world that he is a practical as well as poetical Christian.

CANTABRIGIENSIS.

*Design upon Unitarian Chapels.*

THE Congregational Magazine has returned to the project of dispossessing Unitarians of their places of worship, and we think it may be useful to put some of its statements upon

record. Our readers will bear in mind that this work is the organ of the Independents, who usually set up their claim for being true Dissenters and warm friends to religious liberty.

The Congregational writer represents the Unitarians as maintaining "the high prerogative of reason in separating the credible from the incredible of revelation, and in rejecting as spurious whatever may be above its comprehension;" and further, as denouncing "the preaching of the divinity of Christ as blasphemy, the believing in the existence of the Devil and of Hell as the height of folly, in the sufficiency of the Scriptures as the grossest absurdity," as exalting "the light of reason to the level of revelation," and as holding "but such parts of Scripture to be inspired" as fall in with the "scheme of the gospel as it ought to be." This is a specimen of the theological knowledge and discrimination, and the honesty and candour of the Congregational penman.

He praises the lawyer who started the scheme of ejecting the Unitarians from their Houses of Prayer, for "the habitude of striking at the point, and at those parts only on which somewhat more than mere honour is to be gained."

He refers with apparent satisfaction to the abominable statute of William and Mary against Anti-trinitarians, the repeal of which was hailed with delight by every man of every party, not blinded by passion or hardened by bigotry.

He looks to Courts of Law for assistance to the "Evangelical" cause. He admonishes the Unitarians to give up quietly to the Congregationalists their chapels, which "they could not hold but for the ruinous expense of dragging them into the Court of Chancery, to learn there that the law can and will compel them to act like honest men."

Finally, he promises to return to the subject, and to produce "matters of very grave accusation" against Lady Hewley's Trustees, Dr. Williams's, and those of the College at York, all of whom are to be summoned to the bar of the Congregational.

Will this writer dare to give his name?



## REVIEW.

"Still pleased to praise, yet not afraid to blame."—POPE.

ART. I.—*Sacred Poetry; consisting of Hymns and other Devotional Compositions.* By W. Lamport. Printed for the Author. Sold by Hunter, in London; by Robinsons, in Liverpool. 1825. 8vo. pp. 88.

THE author of this volume has endeavoured, both by reasoning and example, to disprove a well-known *dictum* of Dr. Samuel Johnson's, concerning devotional poetry; and his attempt is not unsuccessful.

However powerful may be the *authority* of the critic whom we have now mentioned, it is certain that many of his recorded opinions are not and cannot be supported by valid arguments. We think that he was destitute of the exquisite taste and sensibility, without which no man can be either a poet or a judge of poetry. The sentences which Mr. Lamport has quoted from him, are singularly erroneous, in point of fact, of principle and of inference. Though Johnson's faculties were vigorous, yet the prejudices to which he was a slave did not always suffer him to discriminate between things essentially different from each other. For example, he "confounded religious contemplations with direct addresses to the Deity,"\* and lost sight of the boundary-line between "hymns which are expressly intended to form a part of public worship, and which partake of the nature of public prayer,"† and devotional poetry, in an extended sense.

It cannot be enough to say, that "Watts's religious poetry is, like the religious poetry of others, unsatisfactory." In this statement Dr. Johnson begs the question: he assumes the whole matter in dispute; nor considers that many critics have pronounced a decision the very reverse of his. When he adds, "the paucity of the topics of devotional poetry enforces perpetual repetition, and the sanctity of its materials rejects the ornaments of figurative diction," he hazards an unfounded *postulatum*, and forms an illogical conclusion. The topics of

this kind of poetry are as various as those of religious reflection;\* as infinitely various as the associations which can be framed by piety and genius, when they are exercised on the works, the providence and the revealed will of the Supreme Being. That devotional poetry does not, of necessity, reject the ornaments of figurative diction, is shewn by a large and most interesting portion of the Hebrew Scriptures.

We cannot subscribe to Dr. Johnson's estimate of the poetical character of Watts: though many of the Psalms and Hymns of that most excellent man are *satisfactory* to us, we are unable to admit that he "has done *better* than others, what no one has done well." The strength of his imagination is more conspicuous than the purity of his taste: nor did he copy from the correctest models, or imitate the great poets of former ages with chasteness, accuracy and success. Intrinsically, we prefer to Watts, especially as a translator of the Psalms of David, some of his predecessors among his own countrymen, some, too, of his contemporaries, and some individuals by whom he has been followed. For the size of the volume, there are more of *Doddridge's* hymns that we approve, both in private reading and in social worship. The tender, pathetic effusions of *Theodosia* [Mrs. Steele] surpass, in genuine poetical excellence, those of Watts; and among the hymns of a lately living writer gems of the first water may be seen. Religious poetry is truly sublime, touching and elegant in the strains of *Barbault*; a name venerable and honoured for a rare union of taste and imagination to "a hallowed bosom," to "the highest aims," and to a blameless and most useful life. Some of the first holy accents which numbers of children lisp, are her *Hymns in Prose*; so designated solely because they are not metrical. However entitled, they constitute a volume which, for the grandeur and beauty of its

\* Preface, p. iv.  
VOL. XXI.

† Ibid.

\* Preface, p. iv.

contents, will find a place in the library of the polite scholar; while its claims on the gratitude of the wise and affectionate parent, are yet more commanding and durable. Her poems, without exception, (and we have just been speaking of poetry of the most elevated class,) are consecrated to the best pursuits and interests of man; to the cause of piety, of freedom, of knowledge, of virtue, friendship and domestic love. The "Summer Evening's Meditation," impressively presents the loftiest conceptions of the Creator of the universe: and this, like the "Address to the Deity," completely refutes the assertion that poetry and religion have no mutual alliance. Her hymns are, in general, extremely calculated for the purposes of social Christian worship: and here we have only to regret that one who wrote so well, wrote, as we must think, so little. The truth is, her humility corresponded with the other great endowments of her mind: her judgment was as exact as her fancy was ardent, and her invention lively. Her main praise will, however, be found in her kind and well-regulated affections, in the exercise of which she conferred on a number of young persons, some of them her near relations, others her chosen friends and companions, blessings of which they can never be forgetful.\*

It is in his Life of Waller that Johnson has unfolded the principles of his deeply-rooted objection, if we must not call it antipathy, to attempts at uniting poetry with devotion.

He there tells us, in opposition to facts and experience, that "poetical devotion cannot often please." The doctrines of religion, he admits, may indeed be defended in a didactic poem. Not only so: he concedes that "a poet may praise the Maker for his works, in lines which no reader shall lay aside." But, for the purpose of rendering these admissions nugatory, Johnson endeavours to distinguish between "piety and the motives to piety," between "God and the works of God;" as though a poem enforcing those motives, and celebrating those

works, were not characteristically *devotional*!

"Contemplative piety," he says, "cannot be poetical." Does he mean that it is never vocal, but exclusively mental—the silent meditation of the heart? When it employs language, that language will usually be its own, but will also sometimes be borrowed from the *poetical* and devotional books of Scripture, and sometimes, we presume, from even the poetical effusions of other pious writers. Though poetry does not confer on man "a state of intercourse with his Creator," (and we never heard that such was or could be the effect of poetry,) still devotional poetry may aid us in gaining that state, and may even render it more delightful and advantageous.

What, though the essence of poetry be invention, or rather combination? In devotional poetry this combination has a range coextensive with Nature, Providence and the discoveries of Revelation. Dr. Johnson affirms, but does not and cannot prove, that "the topics of devotion are few." It is true, if they are absolutely few, "they can be made no more:" but this identical proposition would seem to be unworthy of its author. Nor will it easily be admitted that devotional topics, be they few, or be they numerous, "can receive no grace from novelty of sentiment, and very little from novelty of expression." All this is crude and prejudiced \* theory, in opposition to facts, and to the judgment and feelings of men whose minds piety has elevated and taste has polished.

But "religion must be shewn as it is: suppression and addition equally corrupt it; and such as it is, it is known already." Dr Johnson now speaks of practical and doctrinal religion, not of devotion. His remark, therefore, whether true or false, is irrelevant to the case of devotional poetry. We have always looked upon piety as a certain state of mind and character: by consequence, its feelings and qualities may be expressed, may be improved—like many other qualities and feelings—by the strains of a hallowed taste and genius.

\* Were this the place to speak of her "pieces in prose," we should enlarge on the unrivalled merits of her Essay on "Inconsistent Expectations."

\* We believe that much of this prejudice arose from Dr. Johnson's rooted and unreasonable hostility to Milton's fame.

The critic now returns, as suits his purpose, to "metrical devotion:" for so he chooses to designate religious poetry. From metrical devotion he scarcely hopes to obtain the enlargement of his comprehension and elevation of his fancy. But why not, if "thoughts which breathe and words which burn" can enter (as assuredly they can enter) into devotional poetry? It is worse than useless to theorize, in opposition to numerous and acknowledged facts. The name and character of the Great Supreme do not form the only themes of the sacred poet: creation and life, in all their varied shapes, are nearly exhaustless subjects of his descriptions; with simply abstract *perfection* he is little conversant.

According to Dr. Johnson, scarcely any language, whether it be that of prose or poetry, is admissible in pious meditation. Thanksgiving is to be felt rather than expressed: repentance, "in trembling hope," is not at leisure for cadences and epithets; supplication to God can only cry for mercy.

Thus does he confound the first impulses of the mind awakened to grateful and contrite devotion with those means of improving its piety, which the exercise of human talents, feelings and principles can supply.

"Pious verse" is not essentially the same with devotional poetry: if pious verse helps the memory and delights the ear, it answers no unimportant end; devotional poetry, however, may assist the higher operations of the soul. While our abode is yet on earth, we must thankfully employ the means consistent with the laws of our nature of aiding our unavoidable weakness, and of making religious impressions interesting, durable and efficacious. From Dr. Johnson we turn with pleasure to one of the most intelligent, judicious and impartial of the commentators upon Milton. "A divine poem," observes Mr. Dunster,\* "certainly requires to be written in the chastest style: but it must still be considered that the great reason of exhibiting any serious truths, and especially the more interesting facts of religious history, through the medium of poetry, is thereby more powerfully to attract the attention."

\* On Paradise Regained, B. ii. l. 188.

This remark admits of no dispute: and it overthrows the whole of the sophistry on which we have been animadverting.

*Devotion allied to Poetry* is the title of those of Mr. Lampport's verses with which his volume opens: we make two extracts from them:

"SPIRIT OF POETRY! dost thou diffuse  
O'er all the works of God celestial hues,  
Yet not their AUTHOR celebrate, who  
taught

Thy wings to spread the coloured light of  
thought?

Thy radiant pencil changes not the form  
Of aught thou paintest with a tint more  
warm.

All that the soul conceives of great and  
high,

All it aspires to know beyond the sky,  
(In feeble outlines trac'd by vulgar  
phrase,)

'Tis thine to embody to the mental gaze,  
In lineaments more fair, more bright,  
more true,

Than cold, uncadenc'd language ever  
drew."

\* \* \* \* \*

"If the Creator on his works hath  
trac'd

His name in lines that cannot be effac'd;  
If o'er sweet Nature's many-coloured  
scene,

He spreads the heavens' faint blue, the  
earth's deep green,

The mountain-cloud that upward slowly  
rolls

Along that mountain's breast, as morn  
unfolds;

The purple vapour of the evening sky,

The western sun's refulgent canopy,

And all that through the pencil's magic  
art,

Sublime or soft emotions can impart;

Then, lofty Spirit! thou that holdest  
sway

O'er all the fairest realms of mental day,

Give all the riches of thy wide domain,

To swell the triumph of that heavenly  
train,

FAITH, HOPE and CHARITY: with them  
entwine

Thy arms, thy voice, thy soul, at God's  
blest shrine."

The stanzas which follow are a translation of a Hymn of Boethius; \* one of the few sacred poets from whose works Dr. Johnson made occasionally a version: †

\* According to Mr. Lampport, No. 3, B. i.; in our copy of Boethius, No. 5, B. i.

† Rambler, No. 7, p. 96.



"Thou former of the starry frame,  
How wide thy power, how bright thy  
name!

Who, on thine everlasting throne,  
Hast countless ages reigned alone.

Those rolling orbs, by thee impell'd,  
By thee are in their courses held;  
And all, throughout the realms of space  
Maintain their own appointed place.

When all the leaves of Summer past,  
Lie withering in the Winter blast,  
Thy word contracts the fleeting day,  
And dims the sun's reluctant ray.

So when more bright his glories shine,  
And late his lingering beams decline,  
'Tis thou dost give the lengthen'd light,  
'Tis thou dost speed the rapid night.

Thy goodness and thy power appear  
In all the seasons of the year:  
Seed-time and harvest own thy hand,  
And blessings pour on every land.

All things within thy vast domain,  
Undeviating laws restrain:  
To thee all living creatures tend;  
In thee all worlds and systems end."

In rendering these lines of the Latin poet into English, Mr. Lamport has illustrated his own judgment, by the omission of a few terms and allusions borrowed from Heathen mythology; such as *Boreæ spiritus*—*mitis Zephyrus*—*Arcturus*—*Sirius*.

We think him generally less successful in his hymns than in the other compositions which this volume contains. To the measures of the short piece, which he entitles *The Sacrament*, we must object that they are not sufficiently dignified for the subject and the occasion.

The effect of many pleasing devotional poems, of the present day, is injured by those light and airy metres, which afford great facilities to the substitution of words and rhymes for sense. Let us take the liberty of adding that the studious introduction of texts of Scripture into nearly all Mr. Lamport's hymns, is a blemish, and not an excellence. Thus, in the short poem on the versification of which we have been animadverting, we cannot approve of the lines,

"We pray to be fed  
With 'the living bread  
That cometh down from heaven.'"

The author of *Sacred Poetry* has evidently a taste for enlightened, scriptural and truly evangelical devotion: young persons, in particular, may find

the same taste to be cherished in them by an acquaintance with his compositions; and for such, as well as for other readers, we trust that he will not have written in vain.

N.

ART. II.—*A Sermon, occasioned by the Death of the Rev. John Ryland, D. D., preached at the Baptist Meeting, Broadmead, Bristol, June 5, 1825. By Robert Hall, M. A. Second edition. London, published by Hamilton, Adams and Co. 1825. 8vo. pp. 54.*

TO "turn many to righteousness," to "sow that seed which shall be reaped in life everlasting,"\* is the noblest distinction of the Christian preacher, and will be his governing desire. Mr. Hall, we doubt not, zealously pursues this object: may he richly enjoy this honour! In the mean time, he has a pre-eminence, which, far from being inconsistent with the highest, may vastly promote his own supreme wishes, by advancing the best interests of his fellow-men: those of his discourses, which he lays before the world, come into the hands of an almost unexampled number of individuals. Hardly any single sermons, of the same rank, can vie with Mr. Hall's in popularity. Nor do we ascribe the circumstance of their passing so often through the press, merely to the occasions on which they were delivered, or to the influence of fashion and a name. With very few exceptions, the merit of this gentleman's writings is intrinsic and superior; his eloquence such, as will most of all enkindle admiration in persons of a cultivated mind and of a pure and refined taste. To such persons the discourse before us is sure of approving itself: even though it may not extend, still it will not impair the author's reputation.

Mr. Hall's text is John xxi. 7, "—that disciple whom Jesus loved." His first paragraph furnishes a concise and satisfactory answer to the objection urged against the morality of the gospel, from its silence respecting *patriotism*. Three pages are next employed in repelling a similar objection with regard to *friendship*.

\* Pp. 46, 47, of this sermon.

The preacher then occupies a yet larger portion of his sermon in descending, very elegantly, though generally, on the delights and advantages of the friendship which piety cements, sanctifies and exalts. It is not until we reach the sixteenth page that we find him treating of the passage on which he professes to discourse. His sketch of the history, his estimate of the writings, and his delineation of the character of "him who leaned on the bosom of Jesus," constitute, we think, the most valuable part of the sermon; while they admirably introduce a discriminating and affectionate notice of the late Dr. Ryland, and an eloquent practical address to those who sate under his ministry.

The following observations upon patriotism are extremely judicious:

"In all well-ordered polities, if we may judge from the experience of past ages, the attachment of men to their country is in danger of becoming an absorbing principle; not merely inducing a forgetfulness of private interest, but of the immutable claims of humanity and justice. In the most virtuous times of the Roman Republic, their country was the idol, at whose shrine her greatest patriots were at all times prepared to offer whole hecatombs of human victims: the interests of other nations were no further regarded than as they could be rendered subservient to the gratification of her ambition; and mankind at large were considered as possessing no rights but such as might with the utmost propriety be merged in that devouring vortex. With all their talents and their grandeur they [read, the Romans] were unprincipled oppressors, leagued in a determined conspiracy against the liberty and independence of mankind. In the eyes of an enlightened philanthropist, patriotism, pampered to such an excess, loses the name of virtue; it is the bond and cement of a guilty confederation. It was worthy of the wisdom of our great legislator to decline the express inculcation of a principle so liable to degenerate into excess, and to content himself with prescribing the virtues which are sure to develop it, as far as is consistent with the dictates of universal benevolence."—Pp. 6, 7.

Some of the preacher's remarks upon friendship, are distinguished by the same excellent sense and the same felicity of language:

"Happiness is not to be prescribed, but to be enjoyed; and such is the benevolent arrangement of Divine Providence, that wherever there is a moral preparation for it, it follows of course; of this nature are the pleasures and advantages of virtuous friendship. Its duties, supposing it to be formed, are deducible, with sufficient certainty and precision, from the light of nature and the precepts of Scripture, and none more sacred; but in the act of forming it the mind disdains the fetters of prescription, and is left to be determined by the impulse of feeling and the operation of events.

"Besides, were friendship inculcated as a matter of indispensable obligation, endless embarrassments would arise in determining at what period the relation shall commence; whether with one or with more; and at what stage in the progress of mutual attraction, at what point, the feelings of reciprocal regard shall be deemed to reach the maturity which entitles them to the sacred name of friendship."—Pp. 9, 10.

We are much gratified by the contrast which Mr. Hall draws between ordinary friendship and friendship that is truly virtuous:

"Friendship founded on worldly principles, is *natural*, and though composed of the best elements of nature, is not exempt from its mutability and frailty; the latter is *spiritual*, and therefore unchanging and imperishable. The friendship which is founded on kindred tastes and congenial habits, apart from piety, is permitted by the benignity of Providence to embellish a world which, with all its magnificence and beauty, will shortly pass away: that which has religion for its basis, will ere long be transplanted to adorn the paradise of God."—P. 16.

Concerning the narratives of the resurrection of Lazarus and of the last scenes of our Saviour's life, in the Gospel of John, Mr. Hall says,

"— the author places us in the very midst of the scenes that he describes: we listen to the discourses, we imbibe the sentiments of the principal actors; and, while he says nothing of himself, he lays open the whole interior of his character. We feel ourselves introduced, not so much to the acquaintance of an inspired apostle, as to that of the most amiable of men."—P. 19.

In delineating the moral habits of Dr. Ryland, who appears to have been an eminently upright and pious man, Mr. Hall suggests a very admirable interpretation of a precept occurring

in the New Testament.\* Having spoken of his friend's reluctance to adimadvert openly on the unmerited wrongs which he experienced, the preacher adds,

"He repressed his anger but indulged his grief, and was accustomed on such occasions to conduct himself rather like a person wounded than offended. 'Thus the uneasy sensations with which his mind was fraught were allowed to accumulate, producing not malignity indeed or rancour, of which he was incapable, but permanent disgust. *'Be ye angry,'* saith the Scripture, *'and sin not.'* A violent suppression of the natural feelings is not the best expedient for obviating their injurious effects; and though nothing requires a more vigilant restraint than the emotions of anger, the uneasiness of which it is productive, is, perhaps, best evaporated by its natural and temperate expression; not to say that it is a wise provision in the economy of nature for the repression of injury, and the preservation of the peace and decorum of society."—P. 41.

These are the remarks of a man who well understands the human mind, and comments with sound discrimination upon the ethical lessons of the Christian Scriptures.† Some of the precepts of the New Testament will be ill understood, if we attend not to the distinction of acts and habits. What, in particular, is the just, consistent import of such language as this, "pray without ceasing"—"men ought always to pray, and not to faint"—unless the difference upon which we insist be kept in view?

To the philosopher as well as to the general reader the following paragraph offers an interesting communication, in respect of one of Dr. Ryland's favourite pursuits, and of that peculiar structure of his eyes, which enabled him to engage in it with singular advantage:

"He had a passion for natural history,

in the pursuit of which he was much assisted by the peculiar structure of his eyes, which were a kind of natural microscopes. The observations he made on various natural productions, without the aid of instruments, were really surprising; and though the peculiarity in his visual organs deprived him of the pleasure of contemplating the sublime and magnificent features of nature, it gave him a singular advantage for tracing her minuter operations."—P. 43.

There was in Dr. Ryland a considerable degree of catholicism and liberality, with regard to many from whom he differed on the subject of baptism: of the part which he took in the controversy on that rite Mr. Hall justly observes,

"His treatise on baptism\* furnishes a beautiful specimen of the manner in which religious controversy should be conducted† on a subject on which the combatants on both sides have frequently disgraced themselves by an acrimony and bitterness in an inverse proportion to the importance of the point in debate."—P. 36.

The conclusion of the discourse is in this preacher's best style and taste: carrying forward the views of his hearers and readers to the heavenly states, he thus proceeds:

"To that state all the pious on earth are tending; and if there is a law from whose operations none are exempt, which irresistibly conveys their bodies to darkness and to dust, there is another, not less certain or less powerful, which conducts their spirit to the abode of bliss, the bosom of their Father and their God. The wheels of nature are not made to roll backward; every thing presses on to eternity; from the birth of time an impetuous current has set in, which bears all the sons of men towards that interminable ocean. Mean while heaven is attracting to itself whatever is congenial to its nature, is enriching itself by the spoils of earth, and collecting within its capacious bosom whatever is pure, permanent and divine, leaving nothing for the last

\* Eph. iv. 26.

† See Sermons by W. Gilpin, M. A., No. XL., together with the Discourses of the Rev. and truly excellent Edmund Butcher on our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, [287, &c.,] and an admirable annotation of Bishop Pearce (Commentary, &c.) on John ii. 19. We must express our wonder that the case has been so much mistaken.

\* The praise belongs as justly to his *Candid Statement*, &c.

† It is remarkable that Mr. Belsham [Plea for Infant Baptism, 11, 12] has spoken in the same commendatory terms of Dr. Ryland's temper in the controversy on Baptism. The coincidence, we hope, will not be lost upon our readers and on Mr. Hall, if he be in the number of them.



fire to consume but the objects and the slaves of concupiscence; while every thing which grace has prepared and beautified shall be gathered from the ruins of the world, to adorn that eternal city 'which hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it, for the glory of God doth enlighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.' Let us obey the voice that calls us thither; let us seek the things that are above, and no longer cleave to a world which must shortly perish, and which we must shortly quit, while we neglect to prepare for that in which we are invited to dwell for ever. Let us follow in the track of those holy men, who, together with your beloved and faithful pastor, have taught us by their voice and encouraged us by their example, that '*laying aside every weight, and the sin that most easily besets us, we may run with patience the race that is set before us.*' While every thing within us and around us reminds us of the approach of death, and concurs to teach us that this is not our rest, let us hasten our preparations for another state, and earnestly implore that grace, which alone can put a period to that fatal war which our desires have too long waged with our destiny. When these move in the same direction, and that which the will of heaven renders unavoidable shall become our choice, all things will be ours: life will be divested of its vanity, and death disarmed of its terrors. '*Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness,*' &c.?"—Pp. 52—54.

Mr. Hall's style, though in general it be correct and highly elegant, betrays occasionally some neglect in the employment of *the file*, and indicates the habit of *extemporary* address, in union with that of premeditation and of writing. In the extracts from this discourse, the attentive reader will have noticed such inaccuracies.

Two examples of a faulty construction it may be useful to point out: one of these occurs in p. 8: "Accustomed to look upon the whole human family with a benign aspect, some members of it will attract more of his attention," &c. [it should be, "Although he is accustomed to look upon the whole human family with a benign aspect, yet some members of it will attract more of his attention, &c.]; the other instance will be found in p. 21: "Written, as is supposed, at a very advanced age, the spirit they breathe," &c. [read, "the spirit of

these epistles, written, as is supposed, at a very advanced age, is perceived to be that of a father," &c.]. Nor can we approve of the phrase, *pro aris et focis*, being introduced into a modern sermon, p. 37.

Such improprieties in a writer of inferior merit to Mr. Hall,\* might not be deemed material: though, notwithstanding these effects of careless haste, he delights and attracts, we cannot be desirous that other persons should cite his authority for similar inadvertencies in composition.

There is a want of unity of subject in this discourse. We can with difficulty bring ourselves to believe that it is not made up of two or three fragments. A general analysis of it we have already given. There appears to be first an extract from a sermon on patriotism; then another from a sermon on friendship; and next from a sermon upon the Evangelist John's character, history and writings. All these extracts indeed are applied to the occasion, and to the preacher's object: they are well put together; nicely and skilfully dove-tailed. Still, we perceive no harmonious whole: nor is there any formal and distinct enunciation of the arrangement. Such things Mr. Hall's stated hearers, and most of his readers, tolerate in him: but we doubt whether they would tolerate them in a preacher and a writer of less reputation for what is called *orthodoxy*! In him, too, his denomination bear with a refinement of thought, an elegance of expression, and a frequency of classical allusions, on which they probably would animadvert with severity in some other ministers whom we could mention, and who, it may be, waive every thing of the kind, from a regard to the appropriate claims and duties of the pulpit.

In one instance, at least, Mr. Hall's language concerning Dr. Ryland is

\* It is rarely, indeed, that any violation of the utmost purity of taste can be met with in this writer's compositions. One memorable specimen of departure from that taste we perceive in his biography of Mr. Toller, (p. 28,) concerning whom he says that, under his mental depression, he did business, made improvement, moral and religious, in the mighty waters.

inconsistent \* with itself. He speaks, in p. 36, of his friend as having been "a Calvinist in the strictest sense of the word, and attached to its peculiarities [the peculiarities of Calvinism] in a higher degree than most of the advocates of that system;" but in p. 43, the preacher informs us that the system of divinity to which Dr. R. adhered was "moderate Calvinism, as modelled and explained by Jonathan Edwards." Now Mr. H. will perhaps have the goodness to say, whether Calvinism in its strictest peculiarities, and Calvinism as explained and modelled by Jonathan Edwards, be quite the same thing? Sure we are that by Mr. Hall's distinct admission, it is a *human* system: it originates with the French, it is qualified by the American divine. No well-informed Christians, of a class which Mr. H. often stigmatizes, would dare to speak of their own religious creed as modelled and explained by any "prodigy of metaphysical genius;" did they so speak of it, they would be certain of incurring, and would deserve to incur, the severest censures from this gentleman. They stand exclusively upon the Scriptures: upon that ground, if he please, let Mr. Hall meet them! For a disciple and a minister of Jesus Christ to draw even a modified theology from metaphysicians, is to forsake "the fountain of living waters for broken cisterns."

We cannot pass over another erroneous sentiment, or the corresponding phraseology in which it is clothed: "There was something," says Mr. Hall, "in the taste and disposition of our Lord, considered as man, more in unison with those of John than with [of] any of the other apostles." (P. 17.) Again, in p. 18, "The distinguishing features of our Lord's character, viewed as a perfect human being, were, unquestionably, humility and love." But why these qualifications—why this anxious discrimination? Is there any thing resembling it in the Christian Scriptures? Do the evangelists and apostles studiously inform us that they now speak of our Lord as man, now as God? Can we discover such distinctions in our Sa-

viour's own language? There are none of the kind: and we hesitate not to add that no creed can be scriptural, which is incapable of being expressed in scriptural phraseology.

No passage of this discourse, however, is so reprehensible as the following:

"His [the Apostle John's] meekness and tenderness were never indulged at the expense of truth, his adherence to which was inviolable; nor did he fail to express the utmost abhorrence at any attempt to corrupt it; insomuch that I can easily believe an incident related by Eusebius, that on his entering a public bath, and finding the notorious heresiarch Cerinthus there, he left it with precipitation, exclaiming 'Let us flee from this place, lest it fall and crush that enemy of God.'—P. 22.

We blush for the *easy* credulousness with which Mr. Hall receives and cites a tale that ought to be ranked among "old wives' fables:" we blush for his want of a scholar's accuracy and caution, when he quotes the imagined authority for such a story: above all, we blush for the state of feeling that makes him embrace and relate it with delight.

The narrative does not rest on sufficient testimony. We shall make a reference\* to a part of Lardner's works, that we think conclusive, on this head. Irenæus alludes vaguely to *some* who heard the thing from Polycarp. But such a statement of a rumour is not evidence. Epiphanius tells the same story, with different circumstances, and does not profess to give it on his own knowledge. Let it be considered, too, that according to Irenæus and Theodoret, it was Cerinthus, according to Epiphanius, it was Ebion, whom John met with in the bath.

We are disposed to believe that John in his first Epistle opposes Cerinthus. Every internal mark of falsehood is stamped upon the tale. To be silent concerning the improbability of the Evangelist going to a public bath at Ephesus, how inconsistent are such language and conduct with "the benign affections" justly attributed by Mr. Hall to this apostle; affections greatly improved, no doubt, by means of the rebuke,

\* We noticed a similar inconsistency in his Life of Toller, pp. 11, 42.

\* Works, (8vo.,) Vol. II. p. 86, note.

which, in earlier life, he had received from his great Master?\*

*Jerom* is the voucher of the other narrative respecting John, which Mr. Hall has quoted, and which perfectly accords with what sacred history relates of the beloved disciple's character, spirit and deportment. Neither of the two passages is contained in the works of *Eusebius*, so unfortunately appealed to by our preacher!

That Mr. Hall should believe the Evangelist John to have been capable of uttering so unenlightened and anti-

christian an exclamation as he puts into his mouth; that he should look upon fierceness and commination as signs of "an adherence to *truth*," excites our concern still more than our astonishment. It is a melancholy instance of human fallibility. Thus, however, it happens, that no pre-eminence of talents affords a security against aberrations of judgment. Under the influence of theological prejudices and passions, men transfer, as it were, to others, their own emotions, and disqualify themselves for being literary and historical critics.

N.

\* Luke ix.

## OBITUARY.

1826. Jan. 21, at *Prescot*, aged 47, the Rev. W. T. PROCTER, Minister of the Unitarian Chapel in that town. He was interred in the adjoining cemetery, on the 25th of the same month, by the Rev. G. W. Elliott, of Rochdale, and a funeral sermon was preached on Sunday, February 5, at *Prescot*, by the minister of the Unitarian Chapel, Stockport. The discourse was founded on Acts xiii. 36; "For David after he had served his own generation, by the will of God fell on sleep." Mr. Procter, after being educated for the ministry in the Dissenting Academy which was at Northampton, and conducted by the Rev. John Horsey, was successively stationed at Ilminster, in Somersetshire, at Burton, in Staffordshire, at Dean Row, near Wilmslow, in Cheshire, and at *Prescot*, in Lancashire. Whilst life and health continued, he was actively useful in his family, in the church, and in the world. It may also be remarked, that when affliction laid him aside, he submitted with patience to the will of God, till at last it pleased his heavenly Father to grant him the repose of death. His friends and neighbours, as well as his own family, in losing him, have lost one who was ever ready to exert himself for their advantage. He has left a widow and four children. But we know, that if they in the way of well-doing place their trust in God, he will be the husband and the friend of the widow, and the Father of the fatherless. How consolatory and encouraging too, are the prospects which the gospel reveals! True Christians need not "sorrow as those who have no hope, for if they believe that Jesus died and rose again, so also that God, through Jesus, will bring with

him those that are fallen asleep, and so they shall ever be with the Lord."

S. P.

Feb. 6, Miss ANN CALDWELL, of *Nantwich*, aged 69. Her death is deeply regretted, not only by her relatives but also by many others who were intimately acquainted with her. She had for some years suffered much from impaired health, but she manifested under her sufferings that patience and fortitude which result from enlarged and correct views of the moral and paternal government of Jehovah. Her opinions respecting the object of worship were strictly Unitarian, but at the same time she esteemed the sincere and worthy of all classes of professing Christians. Though she lamented what she thought an occasionally ill-governed zeal in some of the more active advocates of Unitarianism, she was always delighted when she heard of the extension of those views which she considered more consistent with the gospel, than those which are more popular. Her religion was not an inoperative principle; it influenced her conduct: being the result of conviction, it led her to feel an interest in every plan which appeared to her calculated to promote the cause of truth, virtue and happiness. She entered deeply into the privations and afflictions of the more deserving amongst the poor, and her assistance was always to be relied on when the case was properly recommended.

— 16, at *Holdgate*, near *York*, aged 80, Mr. LINDLEY MURRAY, author of the *English Grammar*, and various elemen-



tary books. He was a native of America, and educated for the bar. On the American war breaking out, he went into trade, by which he acquired a handsome competency. Ill health induced him in the year 1784 to travel, and accordingly he came over to this country, where he remained till the day of his death, leading a very retired but useful life, and engaging general respect and esteem. He was a member of the Society of Friends. It is reported that authentic Memoirs of his Life and Writings will shortly be published.

March 4, aged 62, ANNE, the widow of the late John LEES, Esq., of *Castle-Hill, Dukinfield*. The lapse of little more than eighteen months since the loss of her husband, [see Mon. Repos. XIX. 570,] has consigned to the family vault the remains of this most excellent woman. In the union of this pair, which took place early in life, was exemplified in the strictest sense of the matrimonial affinity, the female qualification of being "*an help meet for him*." She became to her family and household the portraiture of all the husband himself exhibited in the management of his extensive concerns, prudent, methodical, attentive to the interests, and liberal in providing for the wants, of her dependants. Unlike the fashionable wife of modern refinement, she had a much wider sphere than the drawing or the dining-room afforded for her superintendence. The whole household establishment was her province, the whole economy of its provision and management had her fore-thought and direction. But this was not all. As the mother of a numerous family, their early education, the formation of their maturer habits, and the correct religious impressions she was anxious they should im-  
bibe, were a source to her of constant care and maternal solicitude. One of her highest gratifications was to see the whole of them assemble with her in the solemn performance of public worship. For this purpose her own attendance was exemplary and uniform. And for this purpose her disinclination to allow social parties on the day set apart for religious improvement, to interfere with its duties and its obligations, led her to resist the innovation of pleasure and the indulgence of convivial meetings as much as possible on that day.

In the attentions due to poverty and sickness whenever her neighbours or dependants had need of assistance or advice, her aid was ever ready. She always recommended great precaution to those who had the care and the management of the sick, and the propriety of her advice and example has been known to arrest the influence of contagion in the dwellings of the afflicted. Her conduct, as a wife and a mother, endeared her to her husband and her children; she was to the former faithful and affectionate; to the latter, a trainer "*in the way that they should go*," a "*light to their path*," and a lamp unto their feet."

Her dissolution, though sudden and unexpected, was consoling to her afflicted children and friends, inasmuch as it was tranquil, and sustained with the most perfect composure. A dysentery hurried her from the enjoyment of health, and the society of a family circle, all eager to contribute to any the least of her comforts, in the short space of forty-eight hours, to the tomb. No murmurs of regret at her approaching dissolution escaped from her lips, and nothing but the lingering looks of affection, like the withdrawing beams of a setting sun, held commerce with those she was leaving behind her. One thus favoured could not avoid, at this awful crisis, remembering Young's admirable description of the death of the righteous:

"The chamber where the good man  
meets his fate  
Is privileged beyond the common walk  
Of virtuous life, quite in the verge of  
heaven."

W. H.

*Dukinfield, March 18, 1826.*

March 11, at *Lewes*, aged 79, after long and trying illness, EBENEZER JOHNSTON, Esq., formerly of Bishopsgate Street, of whom we are able to propose an obituary memoir in the next number.

— 25, at his house in *Cavendish Square*, aged 93, the Hon. and Right Rev. SHUTE BARRINGTON, D. C. L., Bishop of Durham. [Further particulars in the next number.]

## REGISTER OF ECCLESIASTICAL DOCUMENTS.

### *Declaration of the Archbishops and Bishops of the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland.*

At a time when the spirit of calm inquiry is abroad, and men seem anxious to resign those prejudices through which they viewed the doctrines of others, the Archbishops and Bishops of the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland avail themselves with pleasure of this dispassionate tone of the public mind, to exhibit a simple and correct view of those tenets that are most frequently misrepresented. If it please the Almighty that the Catholics of Ireland should be doomed to continue in the humbled and degraded condition in which they are now placed, they will submit with resignation to the Divine will. The Prelates, however, conceive it a duty which they owe to themselves, as well as to their Protestant fellow-subjects, whose good opinion they value, to endeavour once more to remove the false imputations that have been frequently cast upon the faith and discipline of that Church which is entrusted to their care, that all may be enabled to know with accuracy the genuine principles of those men who are proscribed by law from any participation in the honours, dignities, and emoluments of the State.

1. Established for promoting the happiness of mankind, to which order is essential, the Catholic religion, far from interfering with the constituted authorities of any state, is reconcilable with every regular form which human governments may assume. Republics as well as monarchies have thriven where it has been professed, and, under its protecting influence, any combination of those forms may be secure.

2. The Catholics in Ireland of mature years, are permitted to read authentic and approved translations of the Holy Scriptures with explanatory notes, and are exhorted to use them in the spirit of piety, humility and obedience. The Clergy of the Catholic Church are bound to the daily recital of a canonical office, which comprises, in the course of a year, almost the entire of the sacred volume; and her pastors are required on Sundays and festivals, to expound to the faithful, in the vernacular tongue, the epistle or gospel of the day, or some other portion of the divine law.

3. Catholics believe that the power of working miracles has not been withdrawn from the Church of God. The belief, however, of any particular miracle not

recorded in the revealed word of God, is not required as a term of Catholic communion, though there are many so strongly recommended to our belief, that they cannot without temerity be rejected.

4. Roman Catholics revere the Blessed Virgin and the Saints, and piously invoke their intercession. Far, however, from honouring them with divine worship, they believe that such worship is due to God alone, and that it cannot be paid to any creature without involving the guilt of idolatry.

5. Catholics respect the images of Christ and of his Saints, without believing that they are endowed with any intrinsic efficacy. The honour which is paid to these memorials is referred to those whom they represent; and should the faithful, through ignorance or any other cause, ascribe to them any divine virtue, the Bishops are bound to correct the abuse, and rectify their misapprehensions.

6. The Catholic Church, in common with all Christians, receives and respects the entire of the ten commandments, as they are found in Exodus and Deuteronomy. The discordance between Catholics and Protestants on this subject arises from the different manner in which these divine precepts have been arranged.

7. Catholics hold, that, in order to attain salvation, it is necessary to belong to the true Church, and that heresy or a wilful and obstinate opposition to revealed truth as taught in the Church of Christ, excludes from the kingdom of God. They are not obliged to believe that all those are wilfully and obstinately attached to error, who, having been seduced into it by others, or who, having imbibed it from their parents, seek the truth with a cautious solicitude, disposed to embrace it when sufficiently proposed to them; but leaving such persons to the righteous judgment of a merciful God, they feel themselves bound to discharge towards them, as well as towards all mankind, the duties of charity and of social life.

8. As Catholics in the Eucharist adore Jesus Christ alone, whom they believe to be truly, really and substantially present, they conceive they cannot be consistently reproached with idolatry by any Christian who admits the divinity of the Son of God.

9. No actual sin can be forgiven at the will of Pope or Priest, or any person whatever, without a sincere sorrow for having offended God, and a firm resolution to avoid future guilt and to atone

for past transgressions. Any person who receives absolution without these necessary conditions, far from obtaining the remission of his sins, incurs the additional guilt of violating a sacrament.

10. Catholics believe that the precept of sacramental confession flows from the power of forgiving and retaining sins, which Christ left to his Church. As the obligation on the one hand, would be nugatory without the cor-relative duty of secrecy on the other, they believe that no power on earth can supersede the divine obligation of that zeal which binds the confessor not to violate the secrets of auricular confession. Any revelation of sins disclosed in the tribunal of penance, would defeat the salutary ends for which it was instituted, and would deprive the ministers of religion of the many opportunities which the practice of auricular confession affords, of reclaiming deluded persons from mischievous projects, and causing reparation to be made for injuries done to persons, property, or character.

11. The Catholics of Ireland not only do not believe, but they declare upon oath that they detest as unchristian and impious, the belief "that it is lawful to murder or destroy any person or persons whatsoever for or under the pretence of being heretics;" and also the principle "that no faith is to be kept with heretics."—They further declare, on oath, their belief, that "no act in itself unjust, immoral, or wicked, can ever be justified or excused by or under the pretence or colour that it was done either for the good of the Church, or in obedience to any ecclesiastical power whatsoever;" "that it is not an article of the Catholic faith, neither are they therefore required to believe, that the Pope is infallible," and that they do not hold themselves "bound to obey any order in its own nature immoral, though the Pope or any ecclesiastical Power should issue or direct such an order; but on the contrary, that it would be sinful in them to pay any respect or obedience thereto."

12. The Catholics of Ireland swear, that they "will be faithful, and bear TRUE ALLEGIANCE to our Most Gracious Sovereign Lord KING GEORGE THE FOURTH, that they will maintain, support, and defend, to the utmost of their power, the succession to the Crown in his Majesty's family, against any person or persons whatsoever, utterly renouncing and abjuring any obedience or allegiance to any other person claiming or pretending a right to the Crown of these realms;" that they "renounce, reject and abjure the opinion that Princes excommunicated by the Pope and Coun-

cil or by any authority of the See of Rome, or any authority whatsoever, may be deposed and murdered by their subjects, or by any person whatsoever;" and that they "do not believe that the Pope of Rome, or any other Foreign Prince, Prelate, State, or Potentate, HATH, OR OUGHT TO HAVE, any temporal or civil jurisdiction, power, superiority, or pre-eminence, directly or indirectly, within this realm." They further solemnly, "in the presence of God, profess, testify and declare, that they make this declaration, and every part thereof, in the plain and ordinary sense of the words of their oath, without any evasion, equivocation, or mental reservation whatsoever, and without dispensation already granted by the Pope, or any authority of the See of Rome, or any person whatever, and without thinking they are, or can be admitted before God and man, or absolved of this declaration, or any part thereof, although the Pope, or any persons or authority whatsoever, shall dispense with or annul the same, or declare that it was null and void from the beginning."

After this full, explicit and sworn declaration, we are utterly at a loss to conceive on what possible ground we could be justly charged with bearing towards our Most Gracious Sovereign only a divided allegiance.

13. The Catholics of Ireland, far from claiming any right or title to forfeited lands, resulting from any right, title, or interest, which their ancestors may have had therein, declare upon oath, "that they will defend to the utmost of their power, the settlement and arrangement of property in this country, as established by the laws now in being." They also "disclaim, disavow, and solemnly abjure, any intention to subvert the present Church Establishment, for the purpose of substituting a Catholic Establishment instead. And further, they swear that they will not exercise any privilege to which they are or may be entitled, to disturb and weaken the Protestant Religion and Protestant Government in Ireland."

14. Whilst we have, in the foregoing declaration, endeavoured to state in the simplicity of truth, such doctrines of our Church as are most frequently misunderstood or misrepresented amongst our fellow-subjects, to the great detriment of the public welfare, and of Christian charity; and whilst we have disclaimed anew those errors or wicked principles which have been imputed to Catholics, we also avail ourselves of the present occasion, to express our readiness, at all times, to give, when required by the competent authority, authentic and true information upon all



subjects connected with the doctrines and discipline of our Church; and to deprecate the injustice of having our faith and principles judged of by reports made of them by persons either avowedly ignorant of, or but imperfectly acquainted with, the nature of our Church Government, its doctrines, laws, usages, and discipline.

This Declaration we approve, subscribe, and publish, as well that those who have formed erroneous opinions of our doctrines and our principles, may be at length undeceived, as that you, dearly beloved, be made strong in that faith which you have inherited as "the children of saints, who look for that life which God will give to those that never changed their faith from him."—Tob. ii. 18.

Reverend brothers, beloved children, "Grace, mercy, and peace," be to you, "from God the Father, and from Christ Jesus our Lord."—1 Tim. i. 2.

Dublin, 25th January, 1826.

PATRICK CURTIS, D.D.  
OLIVER KELLY, D.D.  
FARRELL O'REILLY, D.D.

PETER M'LOUGHLIN, D.D.  
JAMES MAGAUBAN, D.D.  
GEO. T. PLUNKETT, D.D.  
JAMES KEATING, D.D.  
CHARLES TUOHY, D.D.  
EDWARD KERNAN, D.D.  
PATRICK KELLY, D.D.  
CORNELIUS EGAN, D.D.  
WM. CROLLY, D.D.  
PATRICK MAGUIRE, D.D.  
PATRICK M'MAHON, D.D.  
JOHN M'HALE, D.D.  
DANIEL MURRAY, D.D.  
ROBERT LAFFAN, D.D.  
J. O'SHAUGHNESSY, D.D.  
THOMAS COSTELLO, D.D.  
KIARUN MARUM, D.D.  
PETER WALDRON, D.D.  
JOHN MURPHY, D.D.  
JAMES DOYLE, D.D.  
P. M'NICHOLAS, D.D.  
P. M'GETTIGAN, D.D.  
EDMUND FRENCH, D.D.  
THOMAS COEN, D.D.  
ROBERT LOGAN, D.D.  
PATRICK BURKE, D.D.  
JOHN RYAN, D.D.

## INTELLIGENCE.

The Fourth half-yearly Meeting of the *Shropshire, Cheshire, and Staffordshire Unitarian Association*, will be held at Newcastle under Lyne, Stafford, on Whit-Tuesday, May 16, 1826. Two sermons will be preached by the Rev. J. R. Beard, of Manchester; and the friends of the Association will dine and spend the afternoon together.

The Rev. D. W. JONES, Minister of the Unitarian congregation at *Boston*, has given notice of his resignation at Midsummer next, and they are at present unprovided. C. L.

*Dissenting Ministers.*—The Bishop of Salisbury has made public the following notifications, which have caused no small degree of surprise and discussion: "To my rule of admitting none but Graduates as candidates for Holy Orders, I make one exception, and that is in the case of Dissenting ministers of Orthodox persuasions, who were precluded from an University education, by their dissent from the Established Church, but who having renounced their former ministry, and made a public declaration of their reasons for so doing, can bring sufficient testimonials of their moral character from respectable persons of their former connections, and from beneficed clergymen of the Established Church."—*Sunday Times*, March 26.

If the above may be relied on, Bishop Burgess is likely to have abundance of converts to the Church from Dissenting ministers of "Orthodox persuasions," many of whom are not far from the Church of England, and to them, we apprehend, the lure of the wealth of the Establishment will be irresistible. The good bishop withholds his bribe from the Unitarians: is it that they are not worth buying, or that he esteems them above temptation?

At the last anniversary of the *Royal Society*, Mr. Peel said that his Majesty had authorized him to make known his intention of founding two honorary Prizes, being medals of the value of Fifty Guineas each, to be annually awarded in such manner as should, after due consideration, seem best calculated to promote the ends for which the Royal Society was founded.

At a late meeting of the *Royal Society of Literature*, the Secretary read a paper by Dr. J. Jamieson, containing a collection of various superstitions relating to the Ternary Number. So general among the ancients, in the middle ages, and with the vulgar of times immediately connected with our own, was the ascription of a peculiar virtue to the number Three, that some reference to it was formerly mixed up with nearly all the

actions and circumstances of human life. Of this Dr. Jamieson adduces many curious instances. To the Triad was supposed to belong a mystical perfection, conveyed in auspicious influences to all affairs in which it was employed.

Cambridge, Feb. 2. The late Dr. Smith's Annual Prizes of 25*l.* each, to the two best proficient in Mathematics and Natural Philosophy among the Commencing Bachelors of Arts, were on Friday last adjudged to Mr. WILLIAM LAW, of Trinity College, and Mr. W. H. HANSON, of Clare Hall, the first and fourth Wranglers.

PARLIAMENTARY.  
HOUSE OF COMMONS.

FEB. 24, 1826.

*Mr. Canning's Eulogium upon Mr. Huskisson.*

[In the debates on the commercial policy of the country, the speakers have ranged themselves into two divisions, viz. the philosophers and the practical men. In the former class are the Ministers and most of the leading men in the Opposition, with their respective followers; in the latter, a small minority, are certain bankers, merchants and manufacturers, and persons connected with them—some of these, Mr. BARING, for instance, acting in opposition to former opinions. On the 23rd of February, Mr. ELLICE, the Member for Coventry, obeying the instructions of his constituents, moved for a Committee on the Silk Trade; the motion was seconded by Mr. J. WILLIAMS, the barrister, and Member for Lincoln, who distinguished himself as one of the late Queen's Counsel: this gentleman made a vehement attack upon Mr. HUSKISSON and the political metaphysicians. In reply, Mr. HUSKISSON made a most able and satisfactory speech in defence of himself and his measures: he exposed the inconsistency of Mr. BARING, by reading and commenting on the petition which this gentleman presented from the London merchants, in 1820, in behalf of Free Trade; and he retorted with great severity on Mr. WILLIAMS, whose taking up a question so much out of the line of his profession, he attributed to his recently-formed connexion, not a political one (alluding, we suppose, to Mr. W. having married the daughter of Mr. DAVENPORT, Member for Cheshire, and deeply interested in the silk manufacture). The debate was resumed the next day, when Mr. CANNING applied all the powers of his mind to the defence of his coadjutor Mr. HUSKISSON, the eulogium upon whom is, in fact—and an honourable distinction it is—

the praise of philosophy. Here the orator appeared in a new character; it is, however, not only a becoming one, but also natural. Mr. CANNING was not formed to be "part and parcel" of a system of prejudice and bigotry. In the conclusion of his speech, the Minister met, for himself and colleagues, the charge of having deserted the principles of Mr. PITT, and though we are far from joining in the worship here professed towards that great man, (for great in many respects he undoubtedly was,) we are tempted to lengthen our extract by a passage on the principles and errors of Mr. PITT.]

"But, Sir, this is not the point upon which I felt myself most immediately called upon to answer the appeal of Honourable Members—this is not the point upon which I feel called upon by my public duty to express my sentiments. It cannot be denied, Sir, that, under cover of the measure which the Honourable Gentleman opposite (Mr. Ellice) has thought proper to bring forward; and that he has brought it forward in the sincerity of his heart, and with the view solely to the relief of the sufferers whose cause he advocated, the House must feel convinced (hear, hear); but it cannot be denied, that, under cover of that motion, an opportunity has been taken, not by the Honourable Member, but by others, to attack the commercial regulations now in progress; measures more seriously deliberated upon, and introduced with the more universal consent of all those whose judgments were likely to be best enlightened on such matters, than any other acts of our public policy within my recollection. (Cheers.) The Honourable Gentleman who introduced the motion was of opinion, that it was advisable to adopt a sound and settled system of commercial policy. But the Honourable and Learned Gentleman who seconded the motion, (Mr. J. Williams,) addressed you with a very different feeling, and in a very different spirit. That Honourable and Learned Member, departing from those professional topics, in descanting upon which he had so often arrested the attention of the House, disported himself upon this, to him novel subject, certainly with all the confidence of a novice, but at the same time in a manner which evinced a total incapability of using his weapons, as he was wont to do, in his more practised exhibitions. (Cheers.) The Honourable and Learned Member has not disdained to call to his aid, in the course of his address, all the vulgar topics of ribald invective with which my Right Honourable Friend has been assailed elsewhere; and, in the spirit of these attacks, has attributed to him feelings unknown to his heart, and senti-

ments utterly alien from his nature. (Loud cheers.) And why, I ask, has my Right Honourable Friend been subjected to these attacks? Because, Sir, with an industry and intelligence never exceeded, and rarely equalled, he has devoted his daily labour and his nightly toil to the improvement of the commercial system of his country. (Cheers.) Sir, when this attack was made, the House felt, as one man, the injustice done to my Right Honourable Friend (cheers); and if, in addition to the conscious rectitude of his own mind, and to the gratifying acknowledgment by this House, of his splendid exertions, he wished for another gratification, he had it in the universal feeling of indignation at the attempt so wantonly made to lower him and his measures in the public opinion. (Cheers.) And then, forsooth, came the assertion, that nothing personal was meant. Nothing personal, Sir! Did we not hear mention made of hard-hearted metaphysics, and of the malignity of *the devil*? Nothing personal!—certainly nothing personal to *the devil*, (laughter,) who, by the way, and it is a curious coincidence, is, according to an old proverb, the Patron Saint of the city (Lincoln) which the Honourable and Learned Gentleman represents. (Much laughter.) But could any one fail to understand, that the fiend-like malignity, the coldness of heart, the apathy of feeling, that all these abstract qualities, which the Learned Gentleman had described as distinguishing *features* of those who indulged in abstract speculations, were intended by the Learned Gentleman to be embodied in the person of my Right Honourable Friend; qualities especially calculated to render a man contemptible in the performance of his public duties, and odious in the eyes of his fellow-citizens, for whose benefit those duties are discharged? (Hear.) These topics, Sir, are as vulgar as they are unjust. (Hear, hear.) Why is it to be supposed that the application of philosophy—for I will use that odious word—why was it to be supposed, that to apply the refinement of philosophy to the affairs of common life, indicates obduracy of feeling or obtuseness of sensibility? We must deal with the affairs of men on abstract principles, modified, however, of course, according to times and circumstances. Is not the doctrine and the spirit which now animate those who persecute my Right Honourable Friend, the same which, in former times, stirred up persecution against the best benefactors of mankind? Is it not the same doctrine and spirit which embittered the life of Turgot? (Cheers.) Is it not a doctrine and a spirit such as this, which consigned Galileo to the dungeons

of the Inquisition? (Cheers.) Is it not a doctrine and a spirit, such as these, which have, at all times, been at work to stay public advancement, and to roll back the tide of civilization? (Cheers.) A doctrine and a spirit actuating little minds, who, incapable of reaching the heights from which alone extended views of human nature can be taken, console and revenge themselves by calumniating and misrepresenting those who have toiled to those heights, for the advantage of mankind. (Cheers.)

“Sir, I have not to learn that there is a faction in the country, (a cry of ‘No, No!’ from the opposite Benches)—I mean not a political faction—I should, perhaps, rather have said a sect, small in numbers and powerless in might, who think that all advances towards improvement are retrogradations towards Jacobinism. (Cheers.) These persons seem to imagine that, under no possible circumstances, can an honest man endeavour to keep his country upon a line with the progress of political knowledge, and to adapt its course to the varying circumstances of the world. Such an attempt is branded as an indication of mischievous intentions, as evidence of a design to sap the foundations of the greatness of the country. (Cheers.)

“Sir, I consider it to be the duty of a British Statesman, in internal as well as external affairs, to hold a middle course between extremes; avoiding alike extravagancies of despotism, or the licentiousness of unbridled freedom—reconciling power with liberty: not adopting hasty or ill-advised experiments, or pursuing any airy and unsubstantial theories; but, not rejecting, nevertheless, the application of sound and wholesome knowledge to practical affairs, and pressing, with sobriety and caution, into the service of his country, any generous and liberal principles, whose excess, indeed, may be dangerous, but whose foundation is in truth. (Loud cheering.) This, Sir, in my mind, is the true conduct of a British Statesman; but they who resist indiscriminately all improvement as innovation, may find themselves compelled at last to submit to innovations, although they are not improvements. (Cheers, and cries of ‘hear, hear!’)

“My Right Honourable Friend has been actuated by the spirit which I have endeavoured to describe. Convinced in his own mind of the justice and expediency of the measure which he has proposed for the improvement of our commercial system, he has persuaded the House to legislate in that sense; and, as the fruits of that legislation, I anticipate increasing prosperity and growing strength to the country. (Cheers.)



“Equally false are the grounds of the charge brought against us of having departed from the principles of our great master. (Cheers.) Sir, I deny that we have departed from the general principles of Mr. Pitt. It is true, indeed, that no man, who has observed the signs of the times, can have failed to discover in the arguments of our opponents, upon this occasion, a secret wish to renew the Bank restriction; and it is upon that point, and with respect to measures leading in our apprehension to that point, that we are accused, and not unjustly, in differing from those who accuse us. We are charged with a deviation from the principles of Mr. Pitt, because we declared our determination not to renew an expedient which, though it was forced upon Mr. Pitt by the particular circumstances of the times, is one that ought not to be dragged into a precedent. It never surely can be quoted as a spontaneous act of deliberate policy; and it was an act, be it remembered, of which Mr. Pitt did not live to witness those consequences which effectually deter his successors from the repetition of it. But it is singular to remark how ready some people are to admire in a great man, the exception, rather than the rule, of his conduct. Such perverse worship is like the idolatry of barbarous nations, who can see the noon-day splendour of the sun without emotion; but who, when he is in eclipse, come forward with hymns and cymbals to adore him. Thus, there are those who venerate Mr. Pitt less in the brightness of his meridian glory, than under his partial obscurations, and who gaze on him with the fondest admiration when he has accidentally ceased to shine. (Loud cheering.) My admiration, ‘on this side only of idolatry,’ of that great man, is called forth by the glorious course which he ran, and for the illumination which he shed over his country. But I do not think it the duty of a most zealous worshiper to adopt even the accidental faults of the illustrious model whom we vainly endeavour to imitate. I do not think it a part of fealty to him to adopt, without necessity, measures which necessity alone forced upon him. Treading, with unequal pace, in his steps, I do not think it our duty to select, by preference, those footmarks in which, for a moment, and from the slipperiness of the times, he may have trodden awry.” (Loud cheering.)

#### FOREIGN.

##### FRANCE.

France is treading with backward steps towards feudal despotism, as fast as the Government can drag an unwilling popu-

lation. The measure now in motion is the restoration of the law of Primogeniture, of which the History of the United States, (reviewed in the last No., pp. 103—107) thus speaks in relation to its own country:—“The law of primogeniture existed as a part of the hereditary system. The eldest son inherited, not the title only, but also all the lands of the father. By this unjust and unnatural law, the younger sons and the daughters were doomed to comparative poverty. One portion of the people was made rich, and another poor. Few were placed in that happy medium between wealth and poverty, which is most favourable to virtue, to happiness, and to the improvement of the human faculties. The principle that power could be inherited, was at once rejected by the first emigrants to America. They had witnessed in Europe the pernicious operation of the principle; they were convinced of its absurdity: and even had not such been the case, that equality of rank and condition which existed among them, would have prevented any one from claiming such a privilege for his family, and all others from submitting to it. The law of primogeniture fell of course into disuse, or was abolished. That equality of rights and of rank which prevailed at first, has continued to prevail; and though in some of the colonies the extravagant grants of land which were made by capricious governors to their favourites, introduced great inequality of fortune, yet the salutary operation of various laws is continually diminishing this inequality, dividing and distributing among many that wealth, which in the hands of a few is less beneficial to the public, and productive of less individual enjoyment.” (Pp. 441, 442.)

AN unedited MS. of the celebrated FÉNELON has been lately found buried among the archives of the establishment of St. Anne, in the town of Cambrai. It was composed by Fénelon in the year 1702, and is entitled Réponse de l'Archevêque de Cambrai au Mémoire qui lui a été envoyé sur le Droit du Joyeux Avènement.

##### SPAIN.

THE King has authorized the printing of the Autographical Journal of CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS, and those of several other illustrious navigators, which have been preserved in the Escurial with the most religious care, but which no one has hitherto been allowed to peruse.

##### HOLLAND.

THERE is a Roman Catholic Jansenist Church in Holland, which elects its bishop

without the sanction of the Pope, against whom his Holiness has lately issued a bull of excommunication.

### AMERICA.

*Copy of a Letter from President Jefferson to Dr. Vine Utley, of Lyme, Conn. dated Monticello, March 21, 1819.*

SIR,

Your letter of Feb. 18th came to hand on the 1st inst., and the request of my history of physical habits would have puzzled me not a little, had it not been for the model, with which you accompanied it, of Dr. Rush's answer to a similar inquiry. I live so much like other people that I might refer to ordinary life as the history of my own. Like my friend, the Doctor, I have lived temperately, eating little animal food, and that not as an aliment so much as a condiment for the vegetables, which constitute my principal diet. I double, however, the Doctor's glass and a half of wine, and even treble it with a friend; but halve its effects by drinking the weak wines only: the ardent wines I cannot drink, nor do I use ardent spirits of any kind; malt liquors and cider are my table drinks, and my breakfast, like that also of my friend, is of tea and coffee. I have been blessed with organs of digestion which accept and concoct, without ever murmuring, whatever the palate chooses to consign to them, and I have not yet lost a tooth by age.

I was a hard student until I entered on the business of life, the duties of which leave no idle time to those disposed to fulfil them; and now, retired, and at the age of 76, I am again a hard student. Indeed my fondness for reading and study, revolts me from the drudgery of letter-writing and a stiff wrist, the consequence of an early dislocation, makes writing both slow and painful. I am not so regular in my sleep as the Doctor says he was—devoting to it from five to eight hours, according as my company, or the book I am reading, interests me; and I never go to bed without an hour or half-hour's previous reading of something moral, whereon to ruminate in the intervals of sleep: but, whether I retire to bed early or late, I rise with the sun. I use spectacles at night, but not necessary in the day, unless reading small print. My hearing is distinct in particular conversation, but confused when several voices cross each other, which unfits me for the society of the table. I have been more fortunate than my friend in the article of health: so free from catarrhs that I have not had one (in the breast I mean) on an average of eight or ten years through life. I ascribe this

exemption partly to the habit of bathing my feet in cold water every morning for sixty years past. A fever of more than twenty-four hours I have not had more than two or three times in my life.

THOMAS JEFFERSON.

WE have great pleasure in reporting that on Thursday, Nov. 24, the Foundation-Stone of the *Second Unitarian Church* was laid at New York, with appropriate ceremonies, and a Prayer and Address from the Rev. *William Ware*, Pastor of the First Unitarian Church. [This excellent Address will appear in *The Christian Reformer*.]

While so great a part of the world is standing still, or going back in legislation, the United States of America are making sure and continual advances in all that is just, humane, and liberal. The latest papers bring intelligence that the senate of *Maryland* has abolished the disabilities of the Jews by a public act.

### SOUTH AMERICA.

#### *Religious Liberty in Buenos Ayres.*

THE Government at Buenos Ayres has formally recommended to the House of Representatives of that province the establishment of the liberty of divine worship in the broadest and most unrestricted manner, by the adoption of the following simple but comprehensive law:

“The right which every man has, to worship the Divinity, agreeably to his own conscience, is inviolable in the territory of the province.”

In the note accompanying their proposition, the government adopt a language which must be highly gratifying to every friend of religious liberty.

They say that the word toleration is too tame, and ought not to be introduced into any law which shall be framed on this subject. “The province,” say they, “would appear to descend from the point of civilization which it has attained, if it were to establish a law of toleration, or to pretend to grant a liberty which the public authority was *always* obliged to protect; but since the laws that formerly governed, render necessary an act to abolish them, and give a solemn guarantee to persons who may wish to live in our society, the government has found no other way to do it with dignity than by the proposed law, which it has the honour to transmit for the consideration of the honourable representatives. This act which will complete the liberty of the citizens, will not be less glorious than that which solemnly declared the independence of the Republic.”

In the treaty also recently concluded

between Great Britain and the United Provinces of the Rio de la Plata, we find the following article :

"The subjects of His Britannic Majesty resident in the provinces of Rio de la Plata, shall not be disturbed, persecuted, nor molested on account of their religion, but shall enjoy perfect liberty of conscience, being allowed to perform divine worship either in their own houses,

or in their own private churches and chapels, which they shall be permitted to build and maintain, in convenient situations approved of by the government of the said provinces ; and the subjects of His Britannic Majesty who shall die in the territories of the provinces shall be allowed burial in their own cemeteries, which they shall be free in the same manner to form and maintain."

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Communications have been received from Messrs. H. Clarke; and George Fordham, Jun.; J. C. M.; and An Unitarian Whig. The last-named correspondent signs himself also "No Bigot," not aware, as would seem, that there may be bigotry with regard to *persons* as well as *opinions*, and that the former species of bigotry is the most injurious.

The Editor has received also the communication and Discourse from the Rev. John Brazer, of Salem, in Massachusetts, United States, but owing to some irregularity it came through the Post-office, subject to a very high charge.

We are desired to state that the Obituary of Mr. Parkes in our last Number was inserted by mistake, being intended only as materials for a Memoir, and that the letter H. was not in the original MS.