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Essay on the Meaning and the Abuse of the Terms Moderation and Speculation, in reference to Theological Opinions.

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THERE are certain words that, in strict propriety, have an exclusive application to *moral* qualities: there are other terms that really import nothing more than a particular state of the *understanding*. Let not such expressions be mutually confounded. He, for instance, who would speak of any religious sentiments as *moderate*, or as characterized by their *moderation*, employs inaccurate, and, in some measure, dangerous language: and the man who would brand with the name of *speculation* theological inquiries from which he shrinks and tenets which he rejects—he who would thus suggest that they are either futile or hurtful—is equally incorrect and unguarded in his phraseology.

I can discern and recognize a *spirit of moderation*:* I can describe and recommend, and would endeavour to exemplify, it; but I am at a loss to know, how *moderation* can be predicated of *doctrines* and *opinions*. Religious opinions (I limit myself to the *credenda* of the Christian world) are scriptural, or they are unscriptural: under which of these denominations they fall, is a point to be ascertained by investigation, by argument, by an appeal to the laws of evidence.

If you say that one set of theological sentiments is more friendly to moderation of temper than another set, I will ask you for proofs of this statement. In the mean time, admitting, as a fact, what, thus far, is only an assumption, we are not warranted in declaring that such tenets themselves are *moderate*: this were to forget the difference between epithets belonging to *mental*† and those which should be restricted to *moral* habits.

* Thus, a *spirit of moderation* is intended by Jortin, when he says, (Pref. to Rem. on Eccl. Hist.) “*Learning has a lovely child, called Moderation.*”

† In like manner, it is to *practice*, not to *opinion*, that Horace’s frequently

Perhaps you conceive of *moderation* as something which lies in the middle of two actual or supposed extremes. This you hold to be *moderation of sentiment*. The definition, even if it be intelligible, is unavailing and misplaced. Nothing can be less precise: nothing, as a standard of truth and error, more fallacious. According to Aristotle,* *virtue* is moderation of desire, of emotion, of pursuit: yet this great philosopher did not fancy that *truth* must therefore occupy a sort of central station. Nor do instructors of far higher authority countenance such a test, which is totally *funciful*, with the additional disadvantage of being at almost every man’s command. Indeed, there scarcely exists a religious denomination, which does not imagine that its own creed and discipline are in the happy *medium* between what it deems opposite mistakes, between excess and scantiness. The remark is at least valid, as to those degrees and shades of opinion which are not, on the one side, atheistical, and, on the other, grossly fanatical and superstitious: if these be put aside, every man’s tenets, and every society’s, are, in the view of the several professors of them, the sentiments of a *just moderation*. Extremes, it is affirmed, border on each other, and produce each other: he who, to-day, credits what no evidence supports, and even what evidence contradicts, may, to-morrow, easily bring himself to reject what powerful evidence sustains. As to the remainder of the religious world, all, if they themselves be the judges, are the children of *moderation*: among Protestants, especially, the Calvinist thinks that he

quoted lines (Sat. L. i. lines 106, 107) relate. To *opinions* they are not more applicable than to a parochial *modus*, or to manorial *fin*es.—Boswell’s Life of Johnson, III. 35. (3d ed.)

* Ethic: Nicomach: L. ii. C. vi. So Cleobulus: μέτρον—ἀριστον.

has a fit intermediate rank between the Romanist, on his right hand, and the Remonstrant, or the Arian, on his left—the Arian, between the Calvinist and the Unitarian Christian—the Unitarian Christian,* between the Arian and the Theist—the Theist, between the votary of Revelation and the Atheist—the Protestant Episcopalian,† between the adherent to Papal rites and the Presbyterian—the Presbyterian, between the Episcopalian and the *Friends* or the *Quakers*. A test so vague and indiscriminate as this, cannot be genuine. There is no congruity in affixing the word *moderation* to theological creeds: the terms have no mutual alliance.

But has not an apostle enjoined that our *moderation* be known unto all men?‡ He has: nevertheless, his precept regards not moderation of *sentiment*, (concerning *that* the Scriptures are silent,) but moderation of desire, of affection: it respects strict propriety of demeanour. The expression that he selects, § the motive that he urges, || must be considered as decisive to this effect.

“There is nothing that we can now allege as a plea for discontinuing our researches, that might not have been said with equal plausibility at the time by Wickliff, by Luther, or by later Reformers.” ¶ Let no man censure *speculation* in theology: let no man turn away from inquiries, and from tenets, merely because he deems them *speculative*. Why should we quarrel with so harmless a word, and so excellent a thing? *Speculation* may sometimes be “a mental scheme

not reduced to practice.”* here, most evidently, the fault is not necessarily in the scheme, but quite extrinsic. As to *speculative*, its meaning is, either “contemplative, given to speculation,” or “theoretical, notional, ideal, not practical.”* But nothing except appropriate reasoning and free inquiry, can shew, whether particular tenets are solid, or only a “baseless fabric.”

When false philosophy is ingrafted on misinterpreted Scripture, the result is purely “notional.” Here we have unauthorized *speculation*. On the contrary, when we can lay down the articles of our faith in the very language of the Sacred Volume, we may be sure that our *speculation* is legitimate and correct.

N.

Anecdotes of Job Orton, &c.

A WORK is just published, entitled “The Plain Speaker,”† and ascribed to Mr. *W. Hazlitt*, which we have looked over with some amusement. The writer sets down all he thinks or has ever thought, and tells all that he knows or recollects reading of eminent or distinguished persons. We do not assent always or generally to his opinions, criticisms or censures; (what can be thought of a writer who expatiates through an Essay upon the pleasures of *hating*?) we are pleased, notwithstanding, with his pithy remarks, the occasional vigour of his style, and the truth and nature of some of his descriptions, to say nothing of his frankness and egotism, and the egotism of a man of talents is always interesting.

We take notice of the work in order to introduce an anecdote or two, and especially one of the late Mr. *Job Orton*, of the correctness of which, in all its circumstances, we have some doubts. Some of our elder readers and correspondents may be able to determine how far the author’s representation of the Nonconformist Divine is consistent with truth.

“Learning, then, ordinarily lay-in of folio volumes: now she litters octavos

* Gibbon’s Misc. Works. 8vo. Vol. I. 232.

† The Anglican Church has sometimes claimed to be in the “Via Media.”

‡ Philipp. iv. 5.

§ Το επιεικες, which is equivalent with επιεικελος, Acts xxiv. 4, 2 Cor. x. 1. Of this word the *scriptural* meaning (1 Tim. iii. 3, James iii. 17, 1 Pet. ii. 18, Psalm lxxxv. 4, in the LXX., &c., &c.) is “gentleness:” the *classical* meaning, “reasonableness”—“honourable prudence.”

|| “The Lord is at hand;” a remark quite foreign to the case of *sentiments*.

¶ See Dr. Priestley’s noble sermon on “The Importance and Extent of Free Inquiry in Matters of Religion.”

* Johnson’s Dict. in verb.

† “The Plain Speaker: Opinions on Books, Men and Things.” In 2 Vols. 8vo. Colburn. 1826.

and duodecimos, and will soon, as in France, miscarry of half sheets! Poor Job Orton! why should I not record a jest of his, (perhaps the only one he ever made,) emblematic as it is of the living and the learning of the good old times? The Rev. Job Orton was a Dissenting minister in the middle of the last century, and had grown heavy and gouty by sitting long at dinner and at his studies. He could only get down stairs at last by spreading the folio volumes of Caryl's Commentaries upon Job on the steps, and sliding down them. Surprised one day in his descent, he exclaimed, 'You have often heard of Caryl upon Job, now you see Job upon Caryl.' This same quaint-witted, gouty old gentleman seems to have been one of those 'superior happy spirits' who slid through life on the rollers of learning, enjoying the good things of the world and laughing at them, and turning his infirmities to a livelier account than his patriarchal namesake. Reader, didst thou ever hear either of Job Orton or of Caryl on Job? I dare say not. Yet the one did not therefore slide down his theological staircase the less pleasantly, nor did the other compile his Commentaries in vain! For myself, I should like to browse on folios, and have to deal chiefly with authors that I have scarcely strength to lift, that are as solid as they are heavy, and if dull are full of matter."—II, 291, 292.

Our "Plain-Speaker" verifies his title by his remarks on "Richard Baxter:"

"When Baxter, the celebrated controversial divine and Nonconformist minister, in the reign of Charles II., went to preach at Kidderminster, he regularly every Sunday insisted from the pulpit that baptism was necessary to salvation, and roundly asserted that hell was paved with infants' skulls. This roused the indignation of the poor women of Kidderminster so much, that they were inclined to pelt their preacher as he passed along the streets. His zeal, however, was as great as theirs, and his learning and his eloquence greater; and he poured out such torrents of texts upon them, and such authorities from grave councils and pious divines that the poor women were defeated, and forced, with tears in their eyes, to surrender their natural feelings and unenlightened convictions to the proofs from reason and Scripture, which they did not know how to answer. Yet these untutored, unsophisticated dictates of nature and instinctive affection, have in their turn triumphed over all the pride of casuistry and merciless bigotry of Calvinism."—II, 117, 118.

There may be some exaggeration in this statement; but the substance of it is admitted by Baxter himself. He says, in his "Life and Times," one of those folios with which the "Plain Speaker" is in love, Lib. i. p. 24, referring to the commencement of his ministry at Kidderminster,—“Whilst I was thus employed between outward labours and inward trials, Satan stirr'd up a little inconsiderable rage of wicked men against me. The town having been formerly eminent for vanity, had yearly a *show*, in which they brought forth the painted forms of giants, and such-like foolery to walk about the streets with; and though I said nothing against them, as being not simply evil, yet on every one of those days of riot, the rabble of the more vicious sort had still some spleen to vent against me as one part of their game. And once all the ignorant rout were raging mad against me for preaching the doctrine of original sin to them, and telling them that infants, before regeneration, had so much guilt and corruption, as made them loathsome in the eyes of God: whereupon they vented it abroad in the country, that I preached that God hated or loathed infants; so that they railed at me as I passed through the streets. The next Lord's-day I cleared and confirmed it, and shewed them that if this were not true, their infants had no need of Christ, of baptism, or of renewing by the Holy Ghost. And I askt them whether they durst say that their children were saved without a Saviour, and were no Christians, and why they baptized them, with much more to that purpose, and afterward they were ashamed and as mute as fishes.”

Really, the "ignorant rout" shewed some sign of true grace. Richard must have resorted to some very nice distinctions to justify himself in complaining of being reported to say that *God hated or loathed infants*.

Elsewhere, the "Plain Speaker" does honour to the talents and character of Baxter. "Eloquence" is not, perhaps, the right word as applied to his loose, unfinished style; but for earnestness, and, as was proved by the event, for impressiveness, no writer scarcely can be compared with him. It will readily be conceived that we agree in the author's eulogium

upon the Ever-Memorable Two Thousand Ministers: we think, however, that he is misled by certain unfavourable appearances when he pronounces that the spirit of liberty fled with them or their immediate descendants. They established a principle of freedom, which their descendants have not only maintained but applied to an extent of which they never thought. The Protestant Dissenters of England in the present day are, we are bold to say, a more numerous party of steady friends to true liberty, both civil and religious, than ever before existed either in this or any other country. The "Plain Speaker" might have been expected to know this; but in the flights of his imagination he has overlooked the people from amongst whom he sprung, and is sighing after a state of public thinking and feeling, which he would find realized, if he could survey the world soberly, in the character of that very people.

"We have heard a great deal of the pulpit eloquence of Bossuet and other celebrated preachers of the time of Fénélon; but I doubt much whether all of them together could produce any number of passages to match the best of those in the Holy Living and Dying, or even Baxter's severe but thrilling denunciations of the insignificance and nothingness of life and the certainty of a judgment to come. There is a fine portrait of this last-mentioned powerful controversialist, with his high forehead and black velvet cap, in Calamy's Nonconformists' Memorial, containing an account of the two thousand Ejected Ministers at the Restoration of Charles II. This was a proud list for Old England; and the account of their lives, their zeal, their eloquence and sufferings for conscience' sake, is one of the most interesting chapters in the history of the human mind. How high it can soar in faith! How nobly it can arm itself with resolution and fortitude! How far it can surpass itself in cruelty and fraud! How incapable it seems to be of good except as it is urged on by the contention with evil! The retired and inflexible descendants of the two thousand Ejected Ministers and their adherents are gone with the spirit of persecution that gave a soul and body to them; and with them, I am afraid, the spirit of liberty, of manly independence, and of inward self-respect, is nearly extinguished in England."—II. 301, 302.

We add a curious note from II. 78,

which is quite in the writer's peculiar manner:

"During the peace of Amiens, a young English officer, of the name of Lovelace, was presented at Buonaparte's levee. Instead of the usual question, 'Where have you served, Sir?' The first Consul immediately addressed him, 'I perceive your name, Sir, is the same as that of the hero of Richardson's Romance!' Here was a Consul! The young man's uncle who was called Lovelace, told me this anecdote whilst we were stopping together at Calais. I had also been thinking that his was the same name as that of the hero of Richardson's romance. This is one of my reasons for liking Buonaparte."

*Edgbaston, near Birmingham,
July 1, 1826.*

SIR,
WITHIN the last six months, two cases have occurred in this town of public delinquency of such magnitude as to astonish and distress every sincere friend to virtue, and of such notoriety as to leave no probability of misconception in allusion to the facts. The erring parties were both of them of high consideration in the esteem of their fellow-townsmen, of long-trying apparent integrity, of active and intelligent worth; both of them, perhaps, nearly fifty years of age, if not all out, and both zealous in the dissemination of their respective religious opinions, though differing as widely from each other as the joint name of Christians can allow. I will not suppose that religion has in either case been assumed as a cloak for deception; from my own knowledge of them, their domestic virtues I believe to have been as exemplary as the public confidence in them was firm and unbounded. How then shall we attempt to account for such a lamentable falling off—such a total dereliction of principle? It was no sudden impulse of youthful passion, no ebullition of momentary feeling which the rigid moralist might be disposed to palliate or forgive, but a continued and systematic course of misconduct, which nothing but the shame of exposure could have so long protracted. The first step no doubt was painful, and the succeeding and increasing guilt adds another proof to universal observation, that the human mind can by degrees harden itself to any atrocity. For, once pass the boundary of

innocence, and all future restraint becomes enfeebled or destroyed.

These circumstances dwell painfully on my mind. I feel loth to give up all confidence in my fellow-men, and cannot easily bring myself to believe, that honour, integrity and religion are empty sounds, or mere cobwebs to ensnare the weak into the toils of the artful and unprincipled designer. A few consequent reflections have intruded themselves on my attention, and I crave your permission to present them to the public through the medium of your Miscellany, the willing and anxious vehicle (I believe) of moral and religious truth.

I have brought the two subjects in contact, that I may not be accused or suspected of partiality with respect to the influence their religious opinions might be supposed to have had on their conduct. The partizans of either of their creeds can hardly fail to attribute their inconsistency to some fatal errors in their articles of belief. In the one case (it may be said) the system bordering so closely upon Deism as to leave the rewards and punishments of a future state somewhat more than doubtful, must have had a tendency to reconcile the fluctuating heart to the rejection of the admonitions of conscience; and in the other case, the doctrine of imputed righteousness and the facility and efficaciousness of a death-bed repentance cannot fail to a certain degree to lessen the abhorrence of vice, and make virtue more a matter of convenience than of necessity. May it not be reasonably concluded, that if their religious *opinions* possessed any weight in the scale of their actions they produced more harm than good?—inasmuch as by giving an undue importance to creeds and doctrines in the same proportion would they feel the moral obligations to be less imperative and binding. And so it is perhaps as a necessary result of human imperfections. It is no new reproach that “mankind have a general disposition to lengthen their creeds and shorten their commandments,” and while the vast majority of the world are sensitively keen to the infinite variety in shades of opinion, the solid and inestimable virtues by which society should be held together in peace and goodwill are

overlooked or considered as of secondary importance.

The dispute lately started in the Repository by Mr. Noah Jones, (pp. 72, 73,) furnishes a case in point. He seems to think that to bind mankind together in social harmony it is necessary they should agree to some universal creed. So has said every enthusiast or fanatic since Christianity was first established; they only differ in the bigoted or liberal application of the principle, and if their shackles are not equally galling the best of them are but specious bonds on human liberty. Good Heavens! when will this fatal delusion cease? Or is the woful experience of every historic page still to remain a dead letter and entirely nugatory? Who can possess the right to interrogate me as to my creed before I may be allowed to enter a place of worship consecrated to the adoration and praise of the universal Creator? I ask no questions. I am content to appear in public as an inquirer after truth and as a humble candidate for divine favour. I do not expect that every word I hear from the preacher shall find a corresponding chord in my opinion or affections, but I revere the institution, and waiving all minor considerations it is the wish of my heart to occupy and to leave the place absorbed by every feeling of gratitude and benevolence. Why then must I be pestered with human and fallible inquisitors? And if such can produce no authority for their interference against my being once admitted, how shall it extend to twenty times—to a hundred—or to my becoming a regular subscriber to the place? Who told these self-appointed scrutineers that I am no Christian; or will they condescend to define what the character is? In my humble estimation, every *good man* living is one, and I appeal to the testimony of Christ himself, “Not he that crieth Lord, Lord! but he that doeth the will of my Father,” &c. If I thus admit into the pale of Christianity a disciple of Confucius, of Bramah, of Mahomet, a Persian fire-worshiper, or a sincere and virtuous Deist, I am doing no more violence to the feelings of a high Calvinist or a believer in the infallibility of the Romish Church, than I am by insisting that

an Unitarian is entitled to the appellation—and where are these scruples or dogmatic authorities to end? It appears hardly possible for a reflecting mind to avoid drawing the conclusion from observation and experience, that the moral improvement of the world does not keep pace with the means with which it is possessed, and that while we boast of the light of revelation, the knowledge communicated by the press, and the consequent developement of our reasoning faculties, there still remains a mass of evil in the civil and religious institutions of society and in the ordinary concerns of private life, which seem almost to preclude any fair ground of hope for an effective and permanent reform. The grand obstacle may be said to originate in the imperfection of our station, and from the necessary conflicting passions with which we are endued, and which by impelling us to action must inevitably sometimes lead us astray; but ought we to rest satisfied with this apology for error and crime, or rather should we not strive to render these passions subservient to virtue, and never lose sight of our object? The most powerful passion implanted in the human breast is self-love, and wisely was it thus appointed, as without its controuling influence society could not exist. Every person living is in his own estimation the most important object in the universe, and his existence and happiness are to a certain degree committed to his own disposal. The whole course of his life is a connected series of circumstances depending on this principle which he cannot abandon, and whether he pursues good or bad means to accomplish his intentions, still he is acting from impulses generally conducive to the public good. There is no state of society so low in moral feeling as not to supply some rule of conduct suited to the wants and comforts of its agents or dependants. The rudest and most uncivilized hordes of human beings have some principle by which they are held together, some innate ideas by which they enjoy the common intercourses of life with some degree of security; and, to the bitter reproach of refinement, the social affections are sometimes found in better cultivation amongst the wild and

untutored tribes of the forest or desert than in our receptacles of taste, of splendour, of knowledge, and of civilization. Captain Cochrane in his rambles into the immeasurable wilds of Kamschatca and Siberia says, that the farther he wandered from the abodes of refinement the more civility and kindness he experienced, and the more disinterestedness he observed in the general character. Parke and Lidyard bear ample testimony to the same sentiment, however humiliating it may appear to our vanity or pride; and the interesting narrative of John Hunter develops the native character of the Aborigines of North America in a point of view generally gratifying to the heart desirous of vindicating that Providence which created mankind for social enjoyment, whatever may be their degree of refinement.

The possession and right of property is so closely connected with the innate feeling of self-love as to appear equally incontrovertible. If in the first stages of society a man may have run down an animal to supply himself with food, no reasoning or law can increase his conviction that it is become his own, and that of course no one else has any claim upon him for the whole or any part of it without his consent. He is attacked and he defends himself even to the destruction, if necessary, of his antagonist; and the same consciousness of justice which animated him to resistance, must even in this barbarous state also suggest to him that, in similar circumstances, he himself would have no right to invade the property of another. Hence, however imperfectly the sentiment might be felt or defined we here gain the first impression of the maxim, “to do to others as we would be done by,” and wherever a family, a village, or a community may be found to exist, they must have some such tie for their intercourse and subsistence, or mutual destruction would soon exterminate them all. One can form no idea of a human being in any state of society so ignorant, brutal, or depraved, as to have no glimmerings of equity or virtue in his breast; and no doubt the shades of merit and demerit are intermingled in all as the lineaments of the face are infinitely diversified.

The thief may be chaste and sober, the drunkard may be fair and just in his dealings, the debauchee patriotic and benevolent, and the fanatic may feel compunction for the sufferer whom his frantic zeal is immolating on the bloody altar of superstition. Unhappily, civilization brings in its train an immense increase of artificial wants, quite as imperious in their claims as those of absolute natural necessity. The cravings of luxury are insatiable, and the perversion of the soundest principles of moral obligation will easily encroach upon the mind that has been accustomed to consider even its innocent gratifications as the supreme good. Witness the far-famed simile of Nature's banquet by Mr. Malthus. He supposes a number of persons seated at a table enjoying all the luxuries that sensuality can devise, while a miserable wretch, perishing with hunger and begging from their superfluity a scanty pittance to preserve him from death, may be told with impunity, that there is no room for him nor any supply—that such was Nature's intention and he must submit.

This may serve as a public illustration where numbers are judges in their own cause, and I may be allowed to recite a case in point, which I believe to be a fact, of a more private bearing. A poor old fellow was sentenced to the cat-o-nine-tails by a clerical magistrate for the vile imposition of begging when he did not want, three or four shillings being found in the lining of his hat by the person who apprehended him. At the same time, this same magistrate was moving earth and heaven to obtain an additional church living to the one of four or five hundred a year which he already possessed. Did he beg when he did not want? And how hardly shall a rich man be just between himself and his poor neighbour! Allowing five stripes for every shilling the pauper held while importuning for more, what would be the proportion for his mercenary and unfeeling judge? With all the experience that time and necessity can give, it will still be found, that laws can never be made so complete and just as to suit every case that artifice may devise or accident exhibit; the very attempt at perfection,

perhaps, undermines with many the moral feeling in no inconsiderable degree, as cupidity may think itself justifiable in seizing whatever that imperfection cannot provide for; so that prevarication, sophistry and fraud may define equity as an article in the market for the purchase of those only who have not cunning enough to take care of themselves without paying for justice.

Expostulate with a slave-dealer on his violation of the principles of justice and humanity, and of his doing to others as he himself would wish in return, and he will resent your implications and charges. "There must be," he will say, "labourers to cultivate the soil in every climate, the population could not subsist without them, and if the natives of the South American Islands are not so fit for the purpose as those we import, where is the mighty injustice? It may be very true that many of them die in the passage, but that is not our fault; it is our interest that it should not be so—but we cannot help it. If the trade was protected as it ought to be by the governments of Europe, our risk would not be so great, and having of course larger profits on our exports we could do with fewer subjects. For my part," he continues, "I have nothing to reproach myself with; I never flog any but when they are sulky or refractory, and never suffer any to be thrown overboard unless our provisions run so short as to endanger the lives of our white crew—what can I do more or how can I do less? And as for you, Mr. Humanity! do you never travel in stage coaches, where it is a cold calculation of the owner of the horses whether it is more profitable to work them to death in six or twelve months, or to extend their lives by limiting their services? And wherein are the stupid Africans much superior to horses? Depend upon it there can be no worse blunder in legislation than the attempt to make perfect laws for imperfect beings: there must be some latitude or you are of necessity sometimes compelled to violate them, and you do ten times greater injury to society and to the public morals than if you were not so over precise and fastidious."

What, then, are the inferences in-

tended to be drawn from these desultory (and perhaps tiresome) preliminaries? To this I reply, that the very low ebb of the moral feelings as exhibited in our daily intercourse with society, proves, in no small degree, that they are not recommended and enforced in proportion to their superlative importance, and that too much stress is laid upon those equivocal and doubtful opinions which have little or no influence on the conduct. We are first threatened and alarmed with eternal consequences if we deny the infallibility of one Church establishment or doubt the immaculate purity of another; then comes the appalling train of unintelligible dogmas—the Athanasian Creed, Transubstantiation, Original Sin, Election and Reprobation, Imputed or transferable Righteousness, the damnation of Unbaptized infants, and a thousand other absurdities to which our assent is required—some on the authority of councils, and some on that of still more arrogant individuals; and, to crown all, we are gravely told from the pens and lips of an insulting priesthood, that “heresy and schism are damnable sins as well as murder and adultery.” With such foul and terrific anathemas hanging over our heads, no wonder that the claims of humanity and justice, of equity and benevolence, should be undervalued and neglected. Of what avail is purity of heart and active and persevering virtue, if our final destiny is to be decided by tenets and creeds? We are all agreed in the validity of the precept delivered by Christ, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and thy neighbour as thyself.” The first clause of this endearing and comprehensive rule refers to the silent and rapturous emotions of filial gratitude, and is not cognizable to human penetration; the second comes home to our hearts and business in every occurrence of life; it is pure and expansive morality, and the union of them both constitutes that religion which contains the sum and substance of human excellence. The first may influence the most exalted affections of our natures, but there wants something more to teach us the principles of equity—for as long as human frailty exists, self-love and social must often be in apparent

collision, and require some regulations and much previous instruction to make them harmonize for the public good.

There are so many shades of conflicting interests connected with the institutions of society, that unless the claims of justice are made the study of the *judgment* as well as an appeal to our *feelings*, we are liable at every step we take to go astray; so that if we would establish the principle in the youthful and pliant mind, before the practice and opinions of the multitude may have warped it past recovery, we must depend on an early, close and rigid scrutiny into its worth and importance. Let a high-toned sense of honour and disinterestedness be inculcated by recommending it as a science that will elevate the human character to its highest perfections; and that all mankind will, of course, partake of its advantages. For this purpose let difficult and doubtful cases be introduced by the teachers of youth and encouragements be held out to those who can give the most disinterested and just decisions—that thus, by entering into the windings and intricacies of the real practice and concerns of life, they may early and by degrees be taught to love and act upon the principles their judgments have unfolded and approved, as being most conducive to human happiness. With such instructive themes for school exercises, experience may, perhaps, in time bear her testimony, that the pupils were quite as profitably employed as in translating Ovid or Anacreon. As they advance in life, and must have subjects to occupy their attention, let these topics be continued (for they will be found to be inexhaustible) when friendly parties are formed for intellectual improvement; and they may soon become the ornaments of that society which eventually they must take the lead in conducting. And, lastly, if we must have tests in our religious societies, let them be to confirm and uphold sound and pure morality, and not to enthrall the mind by superstition and intolerance.

Without pledging myself to any continuance of the subject, or requesting the same from your pages, I present the following as a specimen of my meaning. I shall be gratified to

and that your readers or correspondents approve the humble attempt, so that occasionally cases may be brought under their consideration of their own choice and display, but not with the expectation of their engaging in the trammels of a periodical debating society.

A Case, but no Fiction.

A contracts with B to build him a house, for which he is to be paid £1000. The plan, the specification and the estimate are all supplied by himself, accepted by B, and considered fair and equitable. Soon after the completion of the whole A was found to be insolvent, and, on investigation, the building was found to have much injured his circumstances, as it appeared to be worth not less than 1500%. On whom ought this loss to fall? A was embarrassed in his circumstances, and without being aware of the extent of the evil, he imagined (as thousands besides do), that a temporary supply of cash would enable him to turn himself round and gain relief. He thus procured the 1000% to pay his old debts, but his new creditors never received a shilling. It is evident, therefore, that B has 500% in value more than he ought to have, and that A or his creditors are sufferers to the same amount. The law cannot interfere between them, for it is a *bonâ fide* transaction which has had the consent of both parties, and the contract has been ratified and concluded by the full and unconditional payment. At the first glance of the business, justice might seem to require that the 500% surplus should be refunded, but to this B demurs. "Admit," says he, "this principle either to the extent of the 500%, or to a single shilling, and there is no end to the contention or injustice to which it may lead; so that no person, in building himself a house by a similar contract, would be safe from absolute ruin. In retiring from business," (he continues,) "I made my arrangements to suit my property, and set down 1000% as the full amount to which I might prudently go in my building; and if my house is larger or more commodious than could be done for 1000% it is not my fault; I have been deceived but I cannot advance my ex-

penses. It was the builder's duty to take care of himself, and the same rule will apply to me. I have violated no one rule of honourable dealing—why then must I suffer?" "Sell the property then," says equity, "and if you make 1500% of it, give them the overplus, and you are not injured." To this B rejoins, "No, to this neither can I consent." For many years I had set my mind upon that spot as my retreat in declining life; why then must I relinquish all my anticipated pleasure, and, after all my plans are matured, and I begin to enjoy the fruits of my exertions, is it reasonable in any possible point of view that I should forego the whole because unfortunately I have met with a rogue or a fool in the transaction? Property cannot always be estimated by its market value, but often by the feelings of the owner. So with my house; it is the realization of my long-conceived and sanguine wishes, and no pecuniary advantage whatever could recompense me for its surrender." Here, then, is a case in which it appears impossible for the parties interested to come to a mutual, good understanding. They both are right, and yet there is something indisputably wrong. There is an injury inflicted which any one must acknowledge it would be well to have rectified. It is not enough that B. was no voluntary party to an act of injustice, and that, therefore, he is not responsible in any degree for the consequences; if he have that delicate sense of honour which would see with regret that he was an indirect party to the injury of his neighbour, he could not remain thoroughly satisfied in the possession. Circumstances have thrust upon him property which he did not want, and for which he feels that others are suffering both in mind and purse, and yet he sees no way of reimbursing them but to his own disadvantage. Perhaps it would not be possible for the most intelligent and conscientious jury to give such a decision as would leave no ground for objection or complaint; but at least it would in some degree be satisfactory, even though nothing could be done. Perfection in opinion or practice is unattainable; but where perplexities present themselves that baffle reason and good

faith, it should reconcile one to the difficulty; and it is surely more desirable that the disputants should submit to necessity or to an impartial award, than that they should irritate each other to endless animosity and strife. If I may venture an opinion in this instance, I should say, "Don't let B. be disturbed in his possession, let him enjoy the advantages to which he is personally entitled; but let not his successors partake of them where they had no previous title or right. Let B secure to A or to his creditors, a certain sum as a compromise to be received by them at his decease, and if they can make any thing by the sale of the reversion, all parties will then bear a proportionate share in the loss, and thus it might (I think) be pronounced "an equitable adjustment."

JAMES LUCKCOCK.

SIR,

Chatham.

ALTHOUGH a *Dissenter* my reflections will often run on Mother Church, as some call her; I would say GRAND-mother; and the other day it came on a sudden into my head (you know, Mr. Editor, we cannot always account for our cogitations) as pertaining to the practice of her pulpit, where, in the *same* act of supplication, before sermon, the minister uses the alternate posture of *standing* and *kneeling*, commencing the latter with what is called the Lord's Prayer. I know not if any among the several disputatious NON CONS, who have had the temerity to examine into our Episcopal Establishment, "its form and fashion" have remarked on this. Were it not for the *uniform* mode of devotion in the desk, I should have supposed prostration may be deemed preferable in this one instance to shew that degree of deference which is due to the language of a *divinely-commissioned Teacher*, in distinction from that of ordinary men, whose compositions, it may be inferred from such a custom, are not considered as *infallible*. Perhaps some one can explain on the subject who is particularly *interested* in it, which I confess myself not to be any further than as being of those curious folk who always wish clearly to ascertain the *reason* of things.

SECEDER.

Critical Synopsis of the Monthly Repository for June, 1825.

UNITARIAN FUND REPORT. The aspect of things would seem considerably brighter than at the time of the last Report.

Critical Synopsis. In the notice of Dr. Jones, I meant to have written, "Dr. Graves, &c., has attempted a similar vein."

Affinity of Calvinists and Antinomians. Calvinists and Antinomians can well afford to profess a little "humility," when their very creed places them at the summit of the moral creation.

I love such calm, clear, compact little expositions as this. Although, when taken separately, they do not in a technical or scientific manner exhaust the subject, yet they fix the attention upon it about as long as is profitable or tolerable; they cut up by piecemeals and inroads a dark and tangled territory, which it would cost the mind almost too great sacrifices to subdue by a continued effort.

Mr. Bakewell's Remarks on Dr. Smith. Let me again urge upon Mr. Bakewell the republication of his own answers to Dr. Smith, if the attacks of the latter gentleman, in their collected form, are likely to produce any injurious effects on the public mind. At all events, I should hope, and cannot doubt, that the whole controversy will be translated and republished in Geneva. With what interest would it be read in that city!

Mosaic Mission. When, in modern times, devout persons say, that God fought the battles of the allies against Buonaparte, that God produces every special event of Providence, that God has sent us a smiling or a scanty harvest, that God has inspired any given individual with a great and benevolent design, a lofty and holy resolution, or that the voice of Providence is clearly heard enjoining a particular duty, there seems to be no difficulty in comprehending the meaning of such expressions. Now is this a key, or is it not, to those religious expressions in the writings of the ancient Israelites, where facts, of which many are no more extraordinary in their nature than those that have just been enumerated, are ascribed to the immediate

ate agency or command of God? Did Moses, Joshua, Samuel, and David mean *more* by such phraseology than do the devout of our own days? I could wish to see this question discussed and settled.

Your correspondent W. seems to have no clear idea of the Genevan controversy. I know not who has attempted to prove in your pages that "the Church of Geneva is still Calvinistic."

Scruples as to the East India Mission. Mr. Fullagar is perfectly right to inquire into these things, and shews a justifiable independence in resisting for a moment the torrent of popularity which is whirling along the East India Unitarian cause. It is useful to have in the bosom of every sect a few scrupulous and imperturbable spirits, inaccessible to any sudden zeal even for a good thing. Their inquiries, objections and doubts, are of service, not only in restraining the rest of the fraternity from extravagance, but also, in eliciting new, unexpected, safe, and satisfactory reasons in behalf of any object in pursuit. Now, although I will allow to Mr. Fullagar that a little *novelty*, and a little *emulation* towards other sects, were probable ingredients in the combined impulse that lately caused so noble a movement in favour of Mr. Adam, yet, on a moment's reflection, it is easy to perceive, that if ever zeal was rightly and truly directed, it was on this occasion. For it would neither have been just nor generous to abandon Mr. Adam at a moment when he was willing to devote himself to the already planted cause of Unitarianism in India. Then, surely, it is worth while to try an experiment, which *may* be productive of incalculably beneficial effects. And for this purpose, what extraordinary sacrifices are we called on to make? Certainly, at the most, none very prodigious. And let Mr. Fullagar be assured, that the sums which he fears will be thus drawn away from the support of domestic Unitarianism, will be far more than counterbalanced by the increased excitement, attention and consequent attachment produced everywhere in favour of the cause. Who knows how many converts Unitarianism will acquire to herself among the pious and benevolent people of England, by the simple fact of her

becoming missionary? I wonder that Mr. Fullagar's own observation and experience did not suggest to him that it is a great thing to awaken up people's benevolence, and once to enlist their hearts on a side. A good habit is better than a good principle. To throw a check on the existing prepossessions for the foreign mission, in the hope of saving a little money by it, would be to kill the bird that lays the golden egg; or, to speak without *Æsop*, it would repress that generous and lovely spirit of enthusiasm, on whose future incubations and sacrifices we may indefinitely calculate. One word more in the prudent ear of Mr. Fullagar. Who can tell but ever so many thousand rupees will, in the course of twenty years, be contributed by the dusky congregations of Hindostan to the purpose of domestic missions in England? I aver that it is not a *very* improbable thing.

Mr. Eaton's Account of the Unitarian Fund. Quite interesting. I am anxious for the sequel. But does not Mr. Eaton draw, in rather too strong colours, the trimming and hesitating maxims of the Unitarians of his youth? The writings, discourses and history of Priestley, Cappe, Lindsey and others, render some of his positions inexplicable to me.

Churches in Scotland. An instructive and interesting view. Let us cursorily speculate as to what, in a country where perfect freedom of inquiry prevails, would be some of the effects of such a complete internal organization and statistical policy of the several religious sects, as this writer recommends to the Associate Synod. The immediate results would probably be ungracious and unhappy. By making deeper the lines of intervallation between the differing parties, it would at first tend to render them more uncompromising towards each other. The pride and *esprit du corps* of each sect would be increased by a tangible view of its own numbers and power. Mere proselyting zeal would be stimulated to a high degree. This state of things would probably continue, until the whole community were divided into a number of obstinate and constituent *castes*. But among these, it must be recollected, would be the caste of sceptics, who, though sifted out but in small proportions from

each particular sect, would themselves constitute a formidable body, and would be driven by the prevailing example, as well as a sense of their own safety, to hold up their heads, to incorporate and organize themselves, and to make proselytes in turn. By this time, however, and perhaps, in some degree, long before this, the respective sects, compacted, as it were, into so many personal individualities, and unable to insist with any more proselyting success upon the peculiarities of their different creeds, would naturally compare together the points of agreement among themselves, and either from interest, or sympathy, or some other causes, would more or less adopt habits of reciprocal intercourse. Thus the Sadducees and Pharisees joined in leagues together. That very closeness of party-union, which at the outset we found to be so productive of the bigoted and sectarian spirit, would at length render whole denominations more accessible to the light of truth and argument. They would wish to stand or fall together. The social spirit often outlives the theological. A few leading minds would carry with them whole trains of followers. But this speculation I must not pursue any farther, who cannot afford to be an Essayist for the Repository. Let the Nonconformist take it up.

Mr. Baker on Ordinations. If the Editor has thought it worth while to print the remarks on this subject in my last, I have nothing more to say, except that the singular coincidence between Mr. Baker's views and my own existed entirely on paper before I had even glanced at his present communication.

Mr. Rutt on Ordination Services. Rather premature, I imagine, in saying that the question is "set at rest." Does Mr. Rutt suppose, that there will be no more ordinations among consistent and zealous Unitarians? What occasions are better adapted than these to set forth and defend our principles before whole neighbourhoods, and thus increase candid attention and adherents to the cause? Many persons would be drawn to a scene of this kind, who would shrink from an Unitarian tract.

Mr. Frend on the name Unitarian. Let me presume to facilitate the con-

ception of Mr. Frend's theory of the Saviour's personal dignity, by an analytical, though very humble illustration. Take the substance which we call ice. On the introduction and union of an invisible fluid into this substance, it produces new effects on surrounding material bodies, we give it a new name, it excites within our minds new emotions, and we apply it to altogether new and various purposes. Now, the low Humanitarian, according to the opinion of Messrs. Clarke and Frend, is accustomed to view the person of our Saviour in the light of the afore-mentioned ice. Whereas, their own theory of his person, by connecting the operations and power of the Deity immediately with him, are as much superior in value and effect to the other, as the ideas and uses attached to the living fluid are superior to those belonging to the cold and solid substance. If this be not a correct representation of what they wish to convey, I have mistaken their intention. At all events, I regard the speculation as not uninteresting or unimportant.

However this may be, let not Mr. Frend flatter himself that any creed, which will exalt the Saviour even to an indefinite degree, and yet come short of absolutely *deifying* him, will satisfy "our Trinitarian brethren," or "convince them of the impropriety of those epithets, with which they often designate us." The mere "unrivalled supremacy of God the Father" is just as offensive to them all, as *the simplest humanity of the person of Christ*. So that whatever may be our reasons for adopting either the one or the other of these modifications of Unitarianism, let us not be swayed by the hope of conciliating the bigoted advocates of the Trinity. We may better ask, which of the two doctrines is the true and scriptural one, than which will most effectually shield us from misapprehension and calumny.

Dissenters taking the Sacramental Test. I never knew an ethical question quite so intricate and perplexed as this. It seems that Dr. Doddridge, the very Apollo of Dissent in his own time, was nearly non-plused in attempting to decide it. At the first blush of the subject it certainly appears plain. If you are a Dissenter at

all be consistent and thorough-going, and take no test. This is evidently the most obvious and, perhaps, honest-hearted suggestion that occurs to every man. But suppose that by taking the test I can, on the one hand, bring an extensive sphere of influence to bear in favour of the Dissenting interest, and, on the other, contribute somewhat to heal the divisions of the country, by shewing a willingness to conciliate and to meet other parties as sincere as myself half way—shall I be consistent and true to refuse it? This appears to have been the first staggering point with Dr. Doddridge. I suppose he ought not to have been so indulgent to it as he seems. He should, perhaps, have recoiled uncompromisingly from the principle, to do evil that good may come. Had this determination been inflexibly adhered to by the whole Dissenting body up to the present time, perhaps it would have placed their injuries in a more convincing light, and brought relief to an evil which their own consciences, by making real and positive, would have thus made liable to pity and removal. See how the Roman Catholic cause has survived the outrageous bigotry of the last century, and quite run before the Dissenting cause in present favour with the English people. To what can a larger portion of this difference be ascribed than to the pure and unmitigated suffering with which the former chose to sustain their wrongs, while no one exactly knows where to find the amphibious and flexible consciences of the latter?

Gleanings. The Mad Prophet.—Half Unitarian and half Fatalist or Predestinarian.

REVIEW. *Spry's Two Sermons.*—The calmness of this Reviewer deserves much praise. He has triumphed with a gentle hand.

Col. i. 15, &c., is one of the most formidable passages for Unitarians. I am aware that the 19th verse of this chapter ("for it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell") contains quite enough to qualify the exalted attributes, which appear in the preceding passage to be ascribed to Jesus, and to approach so nearly to supreme divinity. Still, if a mode of reading the chapter could be pointed out, which might remove at one stroke even the apparent ascription of

creative power to Jesus, might it not be adopted to better effect, than the interpretation to which Unitarians generally resort, and to which their opponents strongly object as far-fetched and mystical? It is with diffidence that I propose the following reading, asking your correspondents at the same time to state such objections as may occur in their perusal of it. For the purpose of representing what I conceive to be the genuine meaning of Paul, I will here transcribe the whole passage in question, verse by verse, and simply insert a parenthesis. Be it remembered how parenthetical the style of Paul actually was.

12. Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:

13. Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:

14. In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:

15. Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature:

(16. For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:

17. And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.)

18. And he is the head of the body, the Church: who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence.

19. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;

20. And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.

What prevents the pronouns *he* and *him* in the 16th and 17th verses from referring to the Father, or "the invisible God"? The object of Paul in this passage is to trace the analogy between the offices and character of the Father, and those of the Son. Having to this effect in ver. 15 called Jesus the *image of the Deity*, an idea which he immediately strengthens by

another appellation, i. e. the first-born of every creature, or, the *noblest* of all created beings, he then, to construct and display the members of his comparison at large, first gives, in vers. 16, 17, a sketch of the supreme authority and power of God. The reason why the visible creation is not specified in these verses, but only created moral relations, such as principality, power, &c. I conceive to be, in the first place, because, the latter being superior in their nature and value to the former, convey a better idea of the supremacy of the Father, and, in the second place, because the the Apostle wishes to represent Jesus himself as one of those principalities and powers created by the Father, and thus to keep in view the leading points of his comparison. This idea is confirmed by the last clause of ver. 15.

Now the same authority which God has over his moral creation, Christ possesses over the church. Therefore, Paul observes, in the next place, ver. 18, "And HE," (that is CHRIST,) "is the head of the body, the church," &c. &c.

It should be observed, that this mode of interpreting the passage will not be at all affected by supposing, with our critic, *things in heaven and things on earth*, to mean Jews and Gentiles. The Apostle might, in ver. 16, intend to refer the original *creation* or *institution* of these two classes of men to the power of the Deity, and afterwards, as one point of the contrast or antithesis which he is running, state, in ver. 20, how Jesus *reconciled* the same classes unto himself; i. e. united them both into one moral body by his religion. The few other objections which I can imagine against this view of the passage, I will refrain from anticipating, until I ascertain whether it attracts any notice from my readers.

Wellbeloved's Calcutta Sermon.—Mr. Wellbeloved might have enumerated another cause for the inactivity of Unitarians in missionary schemes. Have they not really wanted *zeal*?

The first extract strikes me as too indiscriminately severe. Had Unitarians ever selected one of the South-Sea Islands for the experiment of a mission, and had successfully converted the natives, banishing idolatry, in-

roducing Christian morality, and establishing regular forms of Sabbath worship, I apprehend they would have received applause from all but a few outrageous bigots, and have been troubled with no interference from other sects.

American Publications. The author of the remarks on these publications expresses a wish that the Americans may co-operate with their English brethren in contributing a fund for East-Indian Unitarianism. He has probably ere now been informed that a generous subscription (and I believe more than one) has been promptly raised at Boston for this purpose. And not only this, I am happy also to tell my readers that the Church at Baltimore has been relieved from its difficulties, in consequence, principally, of the liberal subscriptions furnished at Boston. While I rejoice that I was wrong in predicting an opposite result, I regret that I thereby *did* wrong to the benevolent community in question.

A slight error occurs in the mention of the Ware family. William, not Henry, is the younger brother; nor could he have gone to Baltimore, at least officially, to aid in the ordination of Mr. Sparks, his own having been subsequent to that event. Professor Ware himself was there.

I will give an original anecdote, which I can personally authenticate, and which will serve to shew in what estimation this family are held where they are best known. The venerable grand-daughter of Cotton Mather was still worshipping at the Church where her ancestors of three successive generations had ministered, notwithstanding many long years had elapsed since ought but Unitarian doctrines had resounded within its walls, and although she herself still professed, yet mildly, the faith of her fathers. A vacancy having occurred in the pulpit by the death of its aged and revered incumbent Dr. Lathrop, Professor W. soon after officiated there on a Lord's-day morning, and his son H. as a candidate, on the evening of the same day. At the close of the services, I met the lady above-mentioned at the house of a common friend. "Well," she exclaimed, soon after entering, "we have had the Trinity in good earnest at our Church

to-day." "The Trinity!" exclaimed her friend with much surprise, "Why, I had heard that the Messrs. W.'s were engaged to preach for you to-day!" "That is true," she replied, "We had the Father in the morning, and the Son in the afternoon, and if any body has a Holy Spirit, they have."

Some of your readers may not be aware that the admirable extract which you quote from Dr. Channing's Duddleian Lecture was transcribed with high encomiums into the Quarterly Review, Vol. XXVIII. p. 535, where, with a candour as strange as Saul among the prophets, the author was pronounced "one of those men who are a blessing and an honour to their generation and their country." How far the Reviewer would qualify this praise, after hearing of the effects of the Baltimore Sermon, one cannot conjecture.

OBITUARY. Of Mrs. Fanny Castle. A blessed picture.

I am more and more astonished at the extent to which Unitarianism seems to have spread in England, as indicated by incidental names, facts, and circumstances in the Repository. When shall our *census* appear?

INTELLIGENCE. It is a subject of joy to see even a little improvement in the numbers, funds, and prospects of the Manchester College. I can conceive of nothing ultimately to impede its very extensive success.

In the account of the Joint-Stock Projects, I do not comprehend the force of the expression "*ascertained Capital*." Does it mean Capital actually subscribed, or only definitely proposed?

Dr. J. Jones on the Perpetuity of Baptism.

THE Lectures which have lately appeared on Baptism,* do credit to the talents of their respective au-

* Four Lectures, delivered at Worship-Street Meeting-House, near Finsbury Square, London, during the Month of March, 1826, on The History—The Subjects and Mode—The Perpetuity—and The Practical Uses of Christian Baptism. By John Evans, LL.D., Edwin Chapman, James Gilchrist, and David Eaton. 8vo. 6s. 6d. boards.

thors. They are professedly intended to invite discussion and well calculated to answer that end. About a quarter of a century ago, I closely considered the nature of Baptism. The result of my inquiry then, is still present to my mind, and as it coincides with the object of these lectures, I send my ideas for the Monthly Repository.

I then thought, and think so still, that *Infant Baptism* is justified neither by the Scriptures nor by the practice of believers in the first three centuries. I therefore agree with the first and second Lecturers with regard to the history and nature of Baptism. The first took a wide and laborious survey of the subject, and, with a felicity peculiar to himself, he has brought together a number of interesting facts which cannot fail to edify and command the gratitude of his readers. The whole sermon, indeed, is in unison with the character and temper of that most estimable and amiable man.

My second proposition is, that Baptism, though a divine institution, is no part of Christianity: it being fulfilled in Christ, and so fulfilled it was cancelled by him. Here I directly encounter the third Lecturer. His discourse is well conceived and vigorously expressed and shews throughout the zeal and the energy of an honest, independent mind. Though he is not to be charged with intolerance or want of candour he treats his adversaries with too little ceremony, nor is it yet necessary to differ from him on the subject, to be of opinion, that there is more confidence than solidity in his arguments.

The Jews expected that when the Messiah promised to their forefathers had arrived, he was to introduce, as characteristic of his claims, a species of baptism which should wash all diseases from the bodies, and all impurities from the minds of his followers. The question put to John by the Pharisaical delegates, supposes the notoriety of this expectation. "Why dost thou baptize, if thou be not the Christ, nor Elias, nor the Prophet?" John i. 25. The language of the Baptist himself addressed to Jesus supposes it. "I have need to be baptized by thee, and why comest thou to me?" As the wisdom of heaven thought fit to prepare the

Jews for the arrival of their expected Messiah by the divine mission of his forerunner, the same wisdom farther thought proper to authorize this forerunner to signalize the advent of his principal by an external baptism, subordinate to, and symbolical of that noble baptism which the Messiah himself was to administer. This is the purport of the account which John gives of his own baptism. "I, indeed, baptize you with water unto repentance, but he who comes after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry: he will baptize you with holy wind and with fire." *Water, wind and fire* are figures known to the Jews and other nations as symbols of purification. The first of these elements was the most gross and inefficient, as capable only of washing the outside or surface of the character: the other elements were more efficacious, capable of penetrating the interior and purifying the heart. The Baptist intimates that he was *not* the Messiah because he baptized with water only: and because the Messiah which was just succeeding him was to baptize with the more refined and powerful elements of wind and fire. As then the Messiah or the Principal superseded his herald; so his superior office or his baptism by nobler elements superseded the office of John or baptism by water. This is the drift of John's own statement. Our Lord's words are more explicit: "Suffer me now, for thus it behoves me to fulfil all righteousness—every righteous institution." To fulfil a rite or ordinance which pointed to the Messiah, was to answer the purpose of it by complying with it, and then substituting the reality for the shadow. Thus he fulfilled the law, having carried its ceremonies, its types and symbols to their consummation, and then set them aside for ever. Thus, too, he fulfilled the rite of circumcision. Christ was himself circumcised, he then substituted the circumcision of the heart and cancelled that of the body as being only a symbol pointing to the true circumcision which was to follow it.

As baptism was expected to usher in the Messiah, the people went out to John with the expectation that he was himself the Christ. This made

the disciples of Jesus jealous of the forerunner; and their attention being now directed to their Divine Master as the Messiah, they began in opposition to John, to baptize in the name of Jesus. Our Lord did not prohibit them for a very wise and important reason soon to be noticed, though it would have been improper in him to baptize as having already virtually cancelled baptism by water. Accordingly we read, that "though the disciples baptized, Jesus himself did not baptize." John iv. 3. Thus we see that baptism and the Lord's Supper, as ordinances of Christianity, stand upon very different foundations: Christ himself did not practise the one, but personally instituted the other.

It is very unfortunate for Mr. Gilchrist that the very text which is the subject of his discourse, and which he supposes to inculcate the perpetual obligation of baptism, contains its abrogation. "Go, make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." At this time the word βαπτίζω was become exceedingly vague in its signification, the literal being sunk in the metaphorical sense, and that sense always determined by the peculiarity of the noun annexed to it. Thus to baptize *with wind*, meant to purify with wind—to baptize *with fire*, to consume with fire—to baptize *with a burden*, to load with a burden—to baptize *with salt*, to sprinkle or season—to be baptized *with death or sleep*, to submit to death, to sink in death or in sleep—to be baptized *in sin*, to wallow in sin. Thus, too, to baptize *in a name* signifies to assume that name without the ceremony of plunging in water actually accompanying it. "Our fathers were baptized into Moses, in the cloud, and the sea." 1 Cor. x. 2. They are said to be baptized unto Moses, because they followed Moses under the cloud and passed through the sea. Of this description is the above verse. Our Lord compresses the doctrine of the gospel into three heads—an all-perfect and benevolent Being, as the Creator and Governor of the universe, under the name of Father—Jesus Christ commissioned by him to announce a future state of happiness to

the righteous under the name of his Son, and the divine power communicated to the apostles in attestation of his resurrection and ascension to heaven under the name of the Holy Spirit. Christ commanded his apostles to proclaim the gospel under these three heads to the nations, and win them to the belief of it. He delineates the divine doctrine which he had taught them under the figure of three sacred streams; and he enjoins upon them to go and bring the nations of the world to their brink, and there, not administer cups full to their ears or to their lips, but to take and plunge them in, and there detain them till every sense should be filled, till every sin should be washed away, till their minds imbibed new ideas, new hopes, new dispositions, and till their character assumed all the brightness that human imperfection can admit. In the ceremony thus to be administered, there was literal water, and the baptism meant was very different from that for which Mr. Gilchrist contends. Jesus used a figure equally bold when he told them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." Here their literal occupation as fishermen is virtually laid aside, and they are called upon to engage in a new pursuit bearing some analogy to it. As the office of real fishermen is superseded in the one expression, so is the rite of baptism by water superseded in the other. But Mr. Gilchrist will say, Surely this is not true, because the apostles did go, made converts of the nations, and actually baptized them in water. This fact appears not only from ecclesiastical history in the first century and afterwards, but even from the apostolical records, the book of the Acts written by Luke, who was in the number of those who attended on Jesus, and who heard the command given to the apostles and saw it executed. All this is granted, and yet the conclusion, namely, the perpetuity of baptism as a Christian ordinance sanctioned by Christ, is altogether baseless. For the practice owed its temporary continuance to two circumstances peculiar to the times, which rendered it expedient, and not to the authority of Jesus making it a part of his gospel. This remains to be shewn, and baptism in water, as a branch of the

Christian dispensation, is blown on the wind. The Christian name at first was in the highest degree matter of reproach, which it required the greatest resolution to encounter, and from which thousands, though deeply convinced of the truth of Christianity, were disposed to shrink. Nothing was better adapted to overcome this reluctance than *baptism*, as every convert by submitting to it was called upon to make a public avowal of his faith in the face of the church and of the world. Hence baptism was continued by the apostles as the test of sincerity, as prompting to that manly resolution which, when founded in reason, bids defiance to ignominy, to danger and to death, on the part of the believers. The last lecturer was aware of this, and he thus touches upon it: "Converts were to enter the church by baptism openly and in the face of the world, and to witness a good confession before men. Cheerful submission to this ordinance was at once the test of their sincerity and obedience. For, be it remembered, that to be baptized and openly to profess the Christian name was attended in those days with no inconsiderable risk and danger." P. 176. It was this risk and danger that rendered baptism expedient as means well calculated to guard against dissimulation and pusillanimity; but when the temptation to these ceased, the expediency of baptism, as far as it was adapted to answer the above end, ceased with it. This discourse is very creditable to the author. Strong natural powers have supplied in Mr. Eaton the want of academical education: and in vigour of thought, in information, in ease and correctness of composition, he hardly stands behind his respectable brethren.

Prone as the Jews in the early ages of their history were to idolatry, there were many who zealously maintained the worship of the only true God. Those who resembled one another by their peculiar attachment to the religion of their fathers, would naturally unite in times of general degeneracy, and form themselves into a distinct body or community, studying the law and the prophets, and displaying the happy influence of their faith in their lives and conversation. The Israelites, having sojourned in the wilder-

ness for forty years, where they received the law and were supported by the special providence of God, had a strong bias for solitude. In retired situations, the more studious could meditate on the divine law, and the more virtuous maintain the simplicity of nature, uncorrupted by the luxury and vices of cities and large communities. So early as the days of Elijah, societies of this sort were formed in wildernesses; there they established schools and colleges, at the head of which, in successive ages, were the prophets, whose disciples were hence called *sons of the prophets*; and they prevailed not only in Judea, but also in Samaria and in Egypt. In the time of our Lord these communities received the name of *Esseans* or *Essenes*; and it is an interesting fact, though hardly known, that John the Baptist rose among them and was teaching at their head, when he executed his divine commission as the forerunner of Christ. Jesus, by submitting to his baptism, became an Essene, and the school of John, by pointing him out as the Messiah, became the primary school of Christ. In this school, which comprehended all the learning of the age, and where even the Pharisees applied for education as furnishing the best preparation for the Church and the State, the character of the prophets was regarded with the highest reverence, and their writings studied with the utmost diligence. Our Lord, by his precedence of John, became chief of the Essenes; and he thus secured to his followers and to his religion, the support and reputation of that community: and though little or nothing is said in the New Testament of these great advantages, they operated most beneficially as soon as Christianity was preached as a pure system of Judaism in opposition to the ritual law. His enemies immediately strove to separate him from Moses and the prophets, holding up his religion as *new* or *recent*, and his followers as *heretics*, as *Christians* and *Nazarenes*. Against this imputation and these reproaches, the apostles and their adherents found broad shields in the skill and reputation of the Essenes. The wisdom of Jesus appears on every occasion, and I doubt not but one motive with him in submitting to the baptism of John was,

to secure to his followers the benefit of that distinguished order of men against the calumnies and abuses they would have to encounter. In their effort to promote the gospel they felt that benefit, and continued the institution of John, though virtually dissolved by their Divine Master, as a wise expedient to secure the reputation of John and his school against their enemies. They acted in a similar manner with regard to circumcision; they left the Hebrew converts to their own discretion to practise it, if they pleased, though Christ had already substituted for it the circumcision of the heart. It is worthy of remark, that Philo and Josephus furnish signal illustrations of the wisdom of the Jewish believers in retaining for a season the baptism of John. Both these great men are apologists and historians of the Hebrew Christians under the titles of *Esseans* or *Essenes*, and that for no other end than to protect the former with the reputation for virtue, learning and high antiquity which distinguished the latter.

I have further to observe, that the apostles, though they generally practised baptism, seem to have disused and even discouraged it in circumstances where it was unnecessary or where it could be followed by no moral benefit. This is illustrated in the case of Philip and the Ethiopian nobleman: "As they went on their way they came to water; and the eunuch said, Behold, water; what hinders me to be baptized?" Acts viii. 36. The question in the last clause evidently shews that Philip had evinced no design—had rather evinced some disinclination, to baptize the eunuch. This being the case, the question was natural, "What hinders me to be baptized?" The Evangelist clearly considered it in his case as not necessary: yet as the wish of the eunuch was innocent and even laudable, because he attached some moral importance to it, Philip complied with it, and baptized him on the assurance that he believed Jesus to be the Son of God from his heart.

The conduct and language of the Apostle Paul are of themselves decisive as to baptism being a part of the Christian dispensation; for he says expressly, that baptism by water

was not included in the commission given him by Christ: *For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel.* Paul came next to Jesus Christ in liberality and mental enlargement, and he regarded baptism as a ceremony that in the end would become useless, and even a source of strife and disunion. He, therefore, soon laid it aside, receiving the Heathens whom he had converted as members of the Christian Church without it. He talks, indeed, of their being "baptized unto Christ." But the expression is figurative, and is to be understood with the same latitude as when he speaks of the fathers being baptized unto Moses, to express merely that they followed Moses. Luke was the companion of Paul and shared in the elevation of his mind; and hence he sinks out of sight the figure of baptism recorded by Matthew, as liable to be misunderstood by the people for whose use he published his Gospel. Had Jesus intended the phrase, "baptizing all nations," in a literal sense, this Evangelist would not have omitted it. On the other hand, it was most proper in Matthew to record it: he wrote for the Jewish converts who practised the ceremony in a literal sense, and who felt the authority of John as the head of the Essenes and as an auxiliary to Jesus.

J. JONES.

On the Passages ascribed to Matthew and Luke; Matt. i. 18 to ii. 23, and Luke i. 5 to ii. 52.

LETTER III.

SIR,

THE pleasing anticipations of deliverance and prosperity to the Jewish nation, which pervade the whole passage in Luke's Gospel, appears a decisive evidence both of its fabulous character, and that it must have been written previously to the calamities to which they were subjected in consequence of their continued rejection of Christ. A Jewish Christian who had given little attention to the predictions of Jesus respecting the fate of his countrymen, and retained strong national partialities, with great confidence in his own opinions, might cherish favourable expectations of their general conversion

and deliverance while the apostles and primitive disciples with an increasing body of converts remained in Jerusalem and Judea, and might be desirous of inspiring the Gentile converts with that respect which he himself thought was due to the land and people of the Messiah, and of impressing them with the persuasion, that while "he was a light to enlighten all nations," he reflected a peculiar glory and blessedness upon Israel. But when, in consequence of their continued infidelity, the whole body of Christians withdrew from among them, their city and country were devastated, and they were destroyed, or carried captive, and dispersed throughout the Roman empire, such sanguine expectations, and the hope of inspiring the Gentile converts with such sentiments, must cease; and, under circumstances so extremely unpromising, no Jewish convert could have the effrontery to exhibit an anticipated representation of events so opposite to the actual history of the Messiah and the Jewish people. At least, it appears far more probable that a fable of that description should have been devised by a Jewish convert under the former than under the latter state of things. That it is a fable, appears from the contrariety of the ideas which it must have conveyed to those to whom it was addressed from the actual issue of the Messiah's appearance; and that it was penned prior to the general fate of the Jewish people, is rendered highly probable from the same circumstance.

If, indeed, this story had not been of very early origin, it could hardly at any subsequent period have come to be regarded as a part of the Evangelist's original narrative. That narrative being written for the immediate use of a particular body of Christians with whom Luke was conversant, probably in Macedon or Greece, would be retained by them, and read in their churches as an authentic and sufficient gospel history. But it is probable that in Palestine and those countries which were more immediately acquainted with the testimony and writings of the apostles themselves, this record, which was derived from their testimony, would not be regarded as of equal authority with theirs; copies of it would be less circulated and less known and quoted. It is accordingly

observable, that in the Epistles of Polycarp and Ignatius, which contain passages found in Matthew's and John's Gospels, no clear quotations are discoverable from that of Luke, as appears from Lardner's Credibility. (Vol. II. 71—73 and 92, 93.) Under these circumstances, a considerable time might elapse before either this Gospel itself, or the story now attached to it, came into very general notice among Christians; and there might be many churches in which they were at length brought forward in their present connexion, without its being known that they originally formed separate documents.

"The principal objection to the story," observes Dr. Priestley, "is, that it does not appear to have gained any credit in the age of Christ; for *it is certain that it was not believed by the great body, and probably by the whole number of the Jewish Christians, in the age subsequent to that of the apostles*, so that they either had not been taught any such doctrine by them, or if they had heard of it they did not think the account sufficiently authenticated." * The following particulars may be mentioned in confirmation of the fact on which the remark is founded: "Theodoret says that Cerinthus, *as the Jews generally do*, maintained that Jesus was born of Joseph and Mary, but that he excelled all other men in wisdom, temperance, righteousness, and all virtues." Epiphanius says, "Cerinthus and Ebion argue from our Lord's being descended from David and Abraham, that he was a mere man, as do also Merinthus and Cleobulis and Claudius and Demas and Hermogenes." The same writer also says, "It is allowed by all that Cerinthus made use of the beginning of Matthew's Gospel, and from thence endeavoured to prove that Jesus descended in a natural way from Joseph and Mary." † He therefore did not acknowledge the account of the miraculous conception which immediately follows in our present copies of Matthew. "Symmachus was an Ebionite; and the Ebionite heresy is that of those who say Christ was born of Joseph and Mary, supposing him to be

a mere man. There are now commentaries of this Symmachus, in which it is said, that eagerly disputing about the Gospel of Matthew, he defends that heresy." Eusebius, L. vi. C. xvii. * "Jerom says, that the gospel used by the Nazarenes and Ebionites, is by most called the authentic Gospel of Matthew." † This general opinion of the authenticity of the Ebionite Gospel, as distinguished from other copies, must surely have great weight in deciding this controversy, since their heresy consisted in rejecting the miraculous conception, and, consequently, that part of Matthew's Gospel in which it is related. "That very many of the Jewish Christians, who were generally called Ebionites, did not believe the miraculous conception, has the unanimous testimony of all who speak of them, even in the latest periods. It may, therefore, be presumed that this disbelief was general, or even universal, in an earlier age. Justin Martyr, who is the first Christian writer that mentions them at all, gives no hint of there being any amongst them who did believe it; nor does Irenæus: he speaks in general of the Ebionites as '*persevering in the old leaven of generation*, and not understanding that the spirit came upon Mary, and the power of the Highest overshadowed her.'" Priestley, Theol. Repos. Vol. IV. p. 274. Irenæus here quotes from the story in Luke, and we may observe, that he selects the very passage in it, as aptly expressive of the miraculous conception, which Dr. Carpenter supposes to have no such signification.

Again Dr. Priestley observes, "That all the more early Gnostics did believe that Jesus was the son of Joseph and Mary, is asserted by all who make any mention of their opinions." Theodoret mentions Simon, Menander, Cerdon, and Marcion, as "denying the incarnation, and calling the miraculous conception a fable." Of Basilides, who flourished about A. D. 120, Clement informs us, that "his followers celebrated the day of the baptism of Jesus as a festival; they placed it on the 15th day of the Egyptian month Tubi, in the fifteenth year

* Theol. Repos. Vol. IV. p. 272.

† Lardner's Works, by Kippis, Vol. IX. p. 329.

* Theol. Repos. Vol. IV. p. 278.

† Ibid. 277.

of Tiberius. It is probable that this was with them the time of the coming of the Son of God into the world; then Jesus was consecrated by baptism; then the Christ or Spirit descended and took up its abode in Jesus, filled him with abundance of gifts, and qualified him for teaching his doctrine and working miracles." Lardner on Heretics, p. 271; who remarks that "Basilides certainly received the Gospel of St. Matthew," and his dating the advent of Jesus in the fifteenth year of Tiberius, was probably taken from his copy of Luke's Gospel, which must therefore have commenced at that period. That Basilides made use of a copy of Luke's Gospel, appears likely from the mention, in Origen's Commentary upon it, of the Gospel of Basilides, by which, I apprehend, is meant no other than his copy of Luke. Lardner observes, that "it doth not appear but Basilides received the whole or the greater part of the New Testament:" consistently with the above account of his opinion, however, he could not have acknowledged any part of the passages in question either in Matthew's or Luke's Gospel. Irenæus, Epiphanius and Theodoret agree, that Carpocrates, who flourished A. D. 120 to 140, believed that "Jesus was born of Joseph and Mary, like other men, but that he excelled in virtue, was of great capacity and understanding, and wrought miracles." * In common with Cerinthus, he endeavoured to prove from the beginning of Matthew's Gospel that Jesus was the son of Joseph and Mary. "I apprehend," says Lardner, "that they" (Cerinthus and Carpocrates) "received not that Gospel only, but the other Gospels likewise, and all the other books of the New Testament, as they were received by other Christians in their time." Lardner on Heretics, p. 318. But if so, the disputed passages could have formed no part of the Gospels as they were then received, since none, I apprehend, would be so inconsistent as to admit the genuineness of the accounts of the miraculous conception, and yet deny the facts. The circumstance of these heretics, as they are termed, arguing against the miraculous conception from the beginning

of that Gospel which in our present copies declares it so expressly, deserves notice. It should appear from this circumstance that the story in Matthew was not then in existence; and on comparing its particulars with those in Luke, they have, many of them, much the appearance of *after thoughts* contrived to account in some measure for the privacy of Jesus for so many years subsequent to his supposed miraculous origin, and the many circumstances of publicity with which it is represented in both accounts as having been attended. Cerdon, and Marcion, his successor, also disbelieved in the miraculous conception; they both rejected that part of Luke's Gospel which relates to the birth and early life of Jesus, making use, however, of the book in general as the voucher of their Christian faith. Marcion said, that "Jesus came into Judea in the time of Pontius Pilate, under Tiberius Cæsar." The adversaries of these "heretics" asserted that they "received only the Gospel of Luke, and that, not entire." Mr. Lampe, on the other hand, says that Marcion "did not reject the other Gospels, though he preferred St. Luke's as having been guided by Paul." It seems, indeed, probable that the Gospel which was penned by the companion of Paul would be preferred by some Gentile Christians, for whose particular use it was originally written, who would regard it as a sufficient authority, in circumstances in which authentic copies of the other Evangelists could not be so easily procured; but as both Marcion and his predecessor adhered to the sole use of this Gospel, maintaining, however, that its narration commenced from what now forms the third chapter, is there not reason to believe their conclusions upon this point are entitled to particular attention? On this book they and their followers, who were very numerous, principally reposed their confidence in the facts of the Gospel, for which they frequently sacrificed their lives. They must have had very good reasons for this confidence, and these reasons would enable and furnish them with the strongest inducements to determine what really were the original contents of that book; and as they unanimously agreed in rejecting the account which it now con-

* See Lardner's Heretics, p. 311.

tains of the celestial origin of Jesus, though highly favourable to the exalted notions which they entertained concerning his pre-existent nature, there appears to have been no other cause for their rejection, but their conviction, founded probably on a very near and direct testimony, that it formed no part of the production of the Evangelist.

“Now,” says Dr. Priestley, “what could bring persons so opposite to each other, as the Unitarians and Gnostics are represented to have been, to agree in this one thing, but such historical evidence as was independent of any particular system of faith; and which, in the case of the Gnostics, must have been so strong as to overturn the natural influence of their system?”*

We are assured by Dr. Priestley, that “Justin Martyr is the first writer who mentions the miraculous conception,” (meaning, of course, subsequent to the time when the passages in question were penned,) “and that between his time and the publication of the Gospels there was a period of about eighty years.”† Now, whoever examines his arguments with Trypho, as recorded by himself, relating to this subject, must, I think, be convinced that though he was extremely eager to establish the fact of the miraculous conception, he felt the grounds upon which it rested to be far less stable than those on which his faith in the other facts of the gospel history was established. “Since,” says he, “it has been fully proved that Jesus is the Christ of God, whatsoever he is, if I shall not be able to prove that he did pre-exist, and condescended to be made man of the like passions with us, and to be born, and to take upon him our flesh, according to the good pleasure of the Father; it will be more reasonable to say that I was mistaken in this point, but not to deny that he was the Christ, though he should seem to you to be made man of man, and nothing could be proved but that he was made Christ by election. For there are some of our profession who acknowledge him to be the Christ, though they say he

was made man of man, with whom I cannot agree, though the greatest part of us should assert the same.” This consciousness of the comparative instability of those grounds, is, indeed, very apparent from the general complexion of his arguments. It is not till toward the conclusion of his remarks that he ventures to bring forward the narratives ascribed to the evangelists, but refers in the first instance to the supposed prediction of the event, (Isaiah vii. 14,) “Behold a virgin shall conceive,” &c., maintaining that this prediction must have been fulfilled in Jesus, who was the only person of the Jewish nation “that was or was *even said* to have been conceived” in that manner. Trypho, on the other hand, asserts, that the passage simply expresses that “a young woman should conceive;” on which Justin charges him and his race with obstinacy in resisting evidence. To confirm his point, he appeals to various other passages which he imagines refer to it, but which, I believe, no modern or unbiassed interpreter of prophecy would suspect to have any such application. Thus he asserts that the expression of Jacob when pronouncing his blessing on Judah, “the blood of the grapes,” elegantly shews that the blood which Christ had should not be of human extraction, but should proceed from the power of God. He goes on through several sections to maintain that Christ talked with Abraham, Moses and Joshua, and with God himself, “who before all creation begat a certain rational power,” and then asks, “whether the words ‘who shall declare his generation because his life was taken from the earth,’ do not seem to intimate that he whom God delivered unto death for the iniquities of the people had not his origin from man.” And quoting Moses concerning washing in the blood of the grape, and Ps. cx. 3, 4, in which mention is made “of the womb of the morning,” he again asks, “if it does not prove that it was fixed long before, that the God and Father of all things should beget him (Jesus) also of the womb of a woman.” Ps. xix. is also referred to generally to prove “that God did come from heaven and was made man amongst men. After occupying many

* Theological Repos. Vol. IV. p. 283.

† Ibid. p. 292.

sections of his work with such matter as the foregoing, in which the same passages are repeated and the argument drawn from them reiterated, he at length ventures to recite some of the leading particulars as they stand at the beginning of the two Gospels in confirmation of his point, mingling the accounts, but without asserting that they are contained in "the Commentaries of the Apostles and their companions," as he usually does in other cases when quoting from their works, or appealing to their authority. This is the more remarkable, as shortly after, when referring to the undisputed portions of their narratives, he expressly says, that "the apostles have left upon record that the Holy Ghost came upon Jesus like a dove when he came to John, being as was supposed the son of Joseph the carpenter, and being supposed to be a carpenter himself, and a voice came from heaven, that which was said by David, speaking in the person of Christ, 'Thou art my beloved Son, this day have I begotten thee,' affirming that his nativity was then made known." Here is an evident attempt to support his position on the authority of the evangelists, by altering their words to agree with an ancient prophecy supposed by Justin to apply to the birth of Jesus, but which is by Paul applied to his resurrection. Our author now, increasing in confidence with his imagined success, proceeds to assert "that he was begotten of the Father of the universe, and was made man of a virgin, as we have learnt from the commentaries we have already shewn." Hence it should appear that it is not so much on the authority of those "Commentaries," as on the preceding arguments from the ancient Scriptures, that Justin grounds his faith concerning the miraculous circumstances of the nativity; and as he betrays a caution about appealing to apostolic authority in relation to this subject, the reverse of which he manifests when appealing to the undisputed writings of the New Testament, there seems every reason to conclude, that it was then regarded as extremely suspicious. That his inferences from the Old Testament are imaginary and futile, will, I believe, be admitted by all who are likely to

read these remarks. Now since it is in application to this one portion of the New Testament and to no other, that this writer fails so miserably in his proofs, though evidently very solicitous to establish its authenticity, to what other cause can this failure be ascribed but to the total absence of real and substantial evidence?

The above extracts and references to the dialogues of Justin Martyr with Trypho the Jew, are taken from the translation of Mr. Henry Brown, beginning at Section xliii. to Section xc., the subject being treated of or alluded to through many of the intervening sections.

T. P.

Slavery in the United States of America.

Out, out, damned spot!

SHAKESPEARE.

Islington,

July 1, 1826.

SIR,

AMONG the strange anomalies of the age is the existence of Slavery in the United States of America. This dark spot overshadows and debases the southern districts, more especially *the Carolinas*; there it is seen in its native baseness, in its detested malignity. From *Lambert's Travels into Canada and the United States*, 1806—1808, an instructive and entertaining work, it appears that in the State of South Carolina, since its settlement in 1670, the small colony sent over under Governor Sayle remained pure and uncontaminated for several years. But in 1723, we hear of 18,000 *Blacks* and *Mulattos*; in 1734, 22,000; in 1765, 90,000; in 1792, 108,000; in 1800, 150,000; and in 1808, 200,000! What a huge and rapidly increasing mass of iniquity! We shudder at the outrage perpetrated on the feelings of humanity in a land of liberty! *Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon.*

Mr. Lambert writes on the subject with impartiality. He advances all that can be said by way of extenuation. He deems the poor slaves, with a few exceptions, well treated. But this alters not the moral turpitude of the traffic, which reason and religion alike consign to execration. Take the author's own account; it is a true

picture, not overcharged, but stamped with accuracy: "The importation of *Africans* into the *United States* ceased by law on the 1st of January, 1808, and several vessels which arrived with slaves after that period were seized and their cargoes condemned. For the four preceding years, however, the merchants had prepared for *the abolition of the Slave Trade*, and such large importations took place that the market was glutted. The following are the numbers imported into Charleston up to the 1st of January 1808: 1804, 5,386; 1805, 6,790; 1806, 11,458; 1807, 15,676; in all, 39,310! When I arrived, the sales for slaves were extremely dull, owing to the high price which the merchants demanded for them. The planters, who were pretty well stocked, were not very eager to purchase, and the merchants, knowing that a market would ultimately be found for them, were determined not to lower their demands; in consequence of which, *hundreds* of these poor beings were obliged to be kept aboard the ships or in large buildings at Gadsden's Wharf for months together. The merchants, for their own interest, I suppose, had them properly attended to, and supplied with a sufficiency of provisions, but their clothing was very scanty and some unusually sharp weather during the winter carried off great numbers of them! Close confinement and improper food also created a variety of disorders, which together with the dysentery and some cutaneous diseases to which the Negroes are subject, considerably increased the mortality. Upwards of seven hundred died in less than *three* months, and carpenters were daily employed at the wharf in making shells for the dead bodies. A few years ago, when a similar mortality took place, the dead bodies of the Negroes, to save expense, were thrown into the river and even left to be devoured by the Turkey buzzards, in consequence of which nobody would eat any fish, and it was upwards of three months before the corporation put a stop to the practice! These losses, instead of abating the price, served only to increase it, and many were put up at vendue, where, according to their age, size and condition, they sold for three to six hundred

dollars each! The auctioneers live all in one street, near the water-side, in East Bay. They have vendues twice a week, and the place is then like *Babel*, crowds of people bidding for *dead and live stock*, among which Negroes and people of Colour are constantly seen; brokers also praising the good qualities of their commodities and knocking down to the best bidder. I quitted this traffic in human flesh with disgust, though I could not refrain from laughing at the archness of the auctioneer, and the credulity of the bargain-buyer. In most countries people are fond of purchasing bargains, which, as Sterne says, is only buying of a bad commodity that you don't want, because you can get it cheaper than a good one when you do."

But, Mr. Editor, my pen trembles in the mere act of transcribing this horrible account. And where do these infernal scenes take place? Is it in *the West-India Islands*, the long and far-famed abodes of oppression and cruelty, which the poet Montgomery wonders have not been, by the Supreme Being in his wrath, sunk into the ocean? No; these deeds are wrought in *a land* which Washington by his arms, and Franklin by his counsels, have consecrated to *freedom*! Let the *American*, however, be assured that the stain of such acts is indelible. The Southern States, who are involved in this disgrace, should imitate their Northern brethren, who hold their conduct in abhorrence. Neither by their mighty rivers, nor by their wide-spreading lakes, nor by the thundering cataracts of Niagara, can the purple spot be obliterated. "It is to be lamented," says Mr. Lambert, "that *the Slave Trade* was ever introduced; for had it not, *the Whites* would have neglected the unhealthy spots which they now occupy, and have confined themselves to places more congenial to their constitutions. How many *millions* of acres in the world, far superior in every respect to those parts where *Africans* are indispensable, are still covered with immeasurable forests that have never yet echoed to the woodman's axe!" Say not, then, that slavery is the offspring of dire necessity.

Mr. Lambert tells us, among other curious things, that "the penalty for

killing a slave in South Carolina is, if in the heat of passion, 50*l.*; and for pre-meditated murder, 100*l.*!! For the last offence, the murderer is rendered incapable of holding or receiving the profits of any place, office or emolument, civil or military, within the state. The *Negroes*, if guilty of murder or rebellion, are *burnt* to death, and within three or four years two have suffered that horrid punishment! For common offences they are either flogged at home by their *masters* or *mistresses*, or sent to a place next the jail, called the *Sugar House*, where a man is employed to flog them at the rate of a shilling per dozen lashes. I was told that a lady once complained of the great expense she was at for flogging, and intended to *contract* with the man to flog her slaves by the year!"

Mr. Lambert then presents his readers with an anecdote awfully characteristic of *the oppressor* and of *the oppressed*: "Where the Africans are well treated, longevity is no stranger to their race. Several have lived to eighty, ninety, and one hundred years. In 1805, a *Negro* woman died at the age of 116. I shall close this notice of *the Negroes* of South Carolina, with a remarkable instance of inviolable affection and heroic courage evinced in a *Negro* and his wife, who had been recently exported from Africa; and which took place when I was at Charleston. They had been separated and sold to two different persons in the city; the man to Major B., and the woman to Mr. D. For a few months they resided in Charleston, and the Major had often allowed the man to visit his wife, which in some measure reconciled them to their separation. But his master wishing to employ him on his plantation in the country, gave orders for his being sent away! The *Negro* no sooner learned his destiny than he became desperate, and determined on as bold a scheme as the mind of man could conceive, and one that might vie with the far-famed resolution of the Roman *Arria*. He obtained leave of his master on the evening previous to his departure to take a last farewell of his wife. I know not what passed at such an affecting interview, but it is supposed that he prevailed on her to die with him, rather than to

be separated from each other, and obliged to pass their lives in miserable slavery. The next morning they were both found dead, having strangled themselves with ropes! The hands of both were at liberty, so that there is no room to suppose that either had not consented to die. The Charleston papers represented this transaction in a very different light, being fearful of the consequences of *such an example* among the *Negroes*, who, whatever their oppressors may say to the contrary, have proved in innumerable instances that they are occasionally possessed of feelings as sensitive and acute as their *White brethren*."

And now, Mr. Editor, I must in justice add, that I have never yet met with an *American* who did not lament this dreadful evil of slavery, considering it an indelible blot on the banners of their liberty, triumphantly emblazoned throughout the world! At my own table, within the last month, upon reproaching an intelligent Transatlantic Professor of Yale College, in Connecticut, with the prevalence of this accursed practice amongst their Southern districts—his reply was pointed and emphatic: "We owe it, Sir, to *you*, to the *mother country*!" "Then," said I, "like the *mother country*, hasten to its extinction, to its utter extermination." The poet exultingly exclaims—

Slaves cannot breathe in England; if their
lungs
Receive our air, that moment they are
free;
They touch our country, and their shackles
fall;
That's noble, and bespeaks a nation proud
And jealous of the blessing!

The Corporation of London has just commemorated the fact, fixing up in their Common-Council Chamber a *bust*, by Chantrey, of *Granville Sharp*, who legally ascertained that *the sable sons of Africa*, landing on British soil, find it the region of freedom! The chisel of the sculptor could not be more nobly employed, whilst the head of this distinguished philanthropist does honour to the first city in the world.

Dr. Morse, in his *American Geography*, remarks, "There is not a more ridiculous object in the universe than a native of the United States, with a *Declaration of the Rights of*

Man in one hand, whilst with the other he is brandishing the whip over his *affrighted Slaves!*" Surely the period is approaching when an infinitely kind and universally benignant Providence will hear the shrill cries, and avenge the astounding wrongs, of suffering humanity. Prophecy, lifting up the hallowed veil of futurity, hath announced the cessation of this great evil under the sun, and signally desolating will be its annihilation. "Alas, alas, that great city, Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come. And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth her merchandise any more: the merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble, and cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and **SLAVES**, and souls of men. And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all." Rev. xviii. 10—14.

"Verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth." Psa. lviii. 11.

To conclude. I am aware, Mr. Editor, that your *Missellany* circulates throughout the United States of America. To the better and more intelligent portion of their population, these animadversions will not prove unwelcome. The existence among them of *societies for the abolition of Slavery* attests the soundest feelings of their hearts. Even the Supreme Being, it was surmised by one of my Transatlantic correspondents, had avenged the cause of humanity by the destruction, through fire, of the far-famed *Orphan House* in Georgia, erected by the benevolent George Whitfield, the institution having drawn their finances from the iniquitous traffic of human flesh! Your *American Critic*, sagacious and liberal, supposes that his remarks, at the distance of three thousand miles, on your diversified pages are acceptable to the readers of the *Repository*. He is

right, and I thank him for them. But he and his countrymen will, I trust, in return, accept in good part this communication, unceremoniously written on this side of the water, and honestly designed for their amendment. I am an admirer of their government and of their country; the former suited to the bold and unshackled genius of a rising people; the latter presenting, on the grandest scale, to the astonished eye the beauties of nature in an endless variety. For nearly half a century the *stately Vessel* of *Republicanism* has, like Noah's ark, rode "proudly tilting o'er the waves," holding within its capacious bosom a multitudinous class of human beings gathered from the four corners of the earth! Those that sit at the helm will recollect the conduct of the navigators who flung overboard the disobedient Jewish prophet to save themselves from destruction. Thus casting from among them the *accursed burden* of *Slavery*, they also may weather the storms which might at any future period arise to darken their horizon, and eventually bid defiance to the world. I am no political economist, but *the wisdom of the serpent*, blended with *the innocence of the dove*, is the adamant basis of individual and national prosperity.

J. EVANS.

SIR,
SOME persons have expressed surprise at the late attempt on the part of a celebrated writer to separate Paul from Jesus; but it is well known to readers of theology that this is no new thing. The same experiment upon the public mind was tried upon the Continent a century ago, and this was not an original freak. Some Christians have always mistaken the character of the apostle, and viewed him, on that account, with jealousy; but there is no Unbeliever that can help wishing to overthrow his authority, for he was a convert, a proselytist, a witness to Christ, and (which is more unacceptable to the majority of Unbelievers) a reformer who reduced Christianity to its designed simplicity, and thus rendered it unassailable.

Until lately, I was not aware that the Mahometans had anticipated our modern Unbelievers in their attacks upon Paul: some of your readers may

be as little informed upon this point as I have been; and therefore I send for your approbation an extract from the Report of the Scottish Missionary Society, for 1823-4, containing a statement of the fact. Let it be observed, that the Mahometans are equally sincere in their hatred of Paul and their esteem of Jesus; whereas the writers alluded to amongst ourselves, decry Paul in order ultimately to discredit his and our Lord and Master.

PAULINUS.

Mahomedan Fables against St. Paul.

It is well known that the Mahomedans allow Christ Jesus to have been a True Prophet, and the Gospel or "Angeel" to have been a revelation from heaven; but they allege that it has been corrupted, and they ascribe the corruption of it particularly to the Apostle Paul. One day, when the Missionaries, in conversation with a learned Mollah, happened to speak of the conversion of Paul, the Mollah exclaimed, "Paul! that was the very man who corrupted the Angeel—one of the worst of men, and most infamous of characters."

The following is the account which is given in one of their books, the "Raw-sattus Affa," of the manner in which the Apostle, who is there called Yunnus, corrupted the gospel—

"For about eighty years after the ascension of Christ, the Nazarenes walked in the right way; but, after this, one Yunnus, a Jew, led them astray into the paths of blasphemy and error. He appeared in the costume of a travelling devotee, and lodged for about four months in the house of a Christian. He shewed his cursed face to nobody, but gave himself up entirely to devotional exercises; and having, by this means, secured the confidence of the Nazarenes, he requested them to send three of their most learned men, to whose word they could trust, as he had a mysterious revelation from God, which he wished to declare to each of them separately.

"To the first he said, 'Dost thou acknowledge that Jesus raised the dead to life?' The wise man answered, 'I do.'—'And dost thou suppose that these works could be performed by any person, without the operation of the Most High God?' The other answered, 'No.'—'Be assured then,' said Paul, 'that Jesus is the Lord of the world, who came to this earth, and, having finished his work, returned to heaven.'

"To the second wise man he proposed similar questions; and, having received similar answers, he said, 'Be assured

that Jesus is the Son of God, whom he sent into the world, and again received into heaven.'

"Having received the same acknowledgments from the last of the sages, he averred that Jesus was the Lord of the earth, and, as such, had power to disappear when his enemies formed the design of putting him to death.

"After making known these reveries, he retired into his cell, shut the door, killed himself the same night, and took the way to hell. Next day, when the sages were called, they had each a different report to make of the Revelation from Jesus, as communicated to them by Paul. The people exclaimed, 'Let us hear Paul ourselves!' They, accordingly, repaired to the cell; but, finding him dead, the consequence was, that Christians were divided into three sects, each of which took its creed from the report of one of the sages."

In rehearsing this fabulous story, the Mahomedans about Astrachan generally contrive to embellish it with something more of the marvellous. Instead, for example, of allowing Paul to kill himself like another mortal, they furnish him with a particular kind of water, which had the power of dissolving human bodies, as the water of the ocean dissolves and holds in solution common salt: into this he threw himself, and instantly disappeared. In consequence of this and other fables, the name of Paul is held in such abhorrence among the Mahomedans about Astrachan, that to represent him as the author of any particular opinion would, in many cases, seal its condemnation without further evidence.—*Report*, 1823-4.

*Park Wood,
June 30, 1826.*

SIR,
THE proem of John's Gospel has recently been the topic, in your Repository, of such critical discussion as will not fail to promote the interest of theology, by the progress of free inquiry. Your learned and scientific correspondent, T. F. B., (pp. 20—22,) professing to "fight under the banners of Lardner and Priestley," two pre-eminent chiefs, deserves to be considered a standard-bearer of the foremost rank in this field of controversy. Dr. J. Jones (XX. 725—729) has contributed a brief but masterly view of the different schemes of interpreting this ambiguous passage. He alludes to Dr. Priestley, who, in his letters with reference to Mr. Evanson, observes, "It is possible that the Apostle John might have heard of the

logos of Plato, as well as that of the Gnostics, and might intend, in opposition to them, to speak of the true logos, viz. that of the Scriptures." A comparative estimate of these various contributions will probably be furnished in the Synopsis of that accomplished critic, who seems abundantly qualified, in his Transatlantic retreat, to illuminate the old world from the rising eminence of the new. In the warfare of opinions, the arena is open to all who are willing to contend in the amphitheatre, according to the laws of honour and equity, animated by the love of truth, whose "fair guerdon" is the prize of victory: even Teucer, a simple archer of old, advanced with his bow to the front of battle, with impunity, behind the shield of Ajax:

Errare potest: litigiosus esse non vult.

Grotius and Gilbert Wakefield, in their annotations on the exordium of John, supply abundance of authorities to ascertain the acceptation of Logos in the Hebrew Scriptures, in the writings of the Pagan Philosophers, and of the Christian Fathers. The observation of Lactantius is appropriate and conclusive in this respect: "The Greeks use the term logos more aptly than we can use the term word or discourse; because their logos signifies both discourse and reason; since it is both the voice and wisdom of God." "Apollo," says Suidas, "is Jupiter's prophet, and delivers to men the oracles which he receives from his Father."

Πατὴρ δὲ προφήτης ὁ Λογίας Διὸς.
ÆSCHYLUS IER.

Quæ Phæbo Pater omnipotens—
Prædixit, &c.—Æn. iii.

It is well known that the Hebrew idiom was prone to adopt the term denoting the substance, instead of that which expresses the quality inherent in any object. The Evangelist, agreeably to this figure of speech, personifies the Logos of the Supreme—Θεὸς ᾧν ὁ λόγος, The Logos was God, instead of, It was divine, the Θεῖος λόγος of Grecian philosophy. The same Evangelist writes Πνεῦμα ὁ Θεός, instead of πνευματικός, God is a spirit, or rather, without a figure, spiritual: God is love, instead of lovely: God is light, instead of luminous. Πνεῦμα ἐστὶν ἡ

Ἀληθεία. Likewise in a Greek epigram, Ἐλπίς ἐν ἀνθρώποισι μόνῃ Θεὸς ἐσθλὴ ἐνεστίν—Hope in mankind, the only gracious God. The concrete, or attribute, is thus personified by the name of the substantive or being to whom it belongs. By this figure of metonymy, the heart is placed for the affections which it contains. Homer is said to delight in the use of the metaphor, in order to give energy and animation to his poetic diction. (Arist. Rhetoric.) The poet describes Iris as the messenger of Jove, and as a God:

Κρονίων
Ἐν νεφεῖ ῥηριξε, τερας μεροπῶν ἀνθρώπων.—Il. xi.

When he brings
Over the earth a cloud, will therein set
His triple-coloured bow, whereon to look,
And call to mind his covenant.

Par. Lost, B. ii.

Iris is derived from a Greek word signifying to speak. In the book of Revelation, the first verse of the tenth chapter contains a magnificent representation of an angel descending from heaven, clothed in a cloud, and a rainbow upon his head. These analogies, (in the Jewish Scriptures and the Greek literature,) though they satisfy not the judgment, amuse the fancy, in tracing the kindred imagery and mythology of the ancients. The Targums or Chaldee Paraphrasts frequently substitute the Word of Jehovah for the Hebrew Jehovah. That of Onkelos on Gen. xxviii. 21, has, "the word of Jehovah shall be my God." The Minerva of Athens was Wisdom personified—"Paterno edita vertice Pallas. Proximos illi tamen occupavit Pallas honores. (Hor. Carm.) Orta autem simul est cum mente divina: quamobrem lex vera—recta est ratio summi Jovis. (Cicero de legibus.)

This logos, the Evangelist observes, "tabernacled in us," or in human nature, (see Jos. Mede's Works,) of which he partook, who is termed the express image or character of the Divine perfection; and who was rendered unto us Wisdom, as we have the mind of Christ. Faith cometh by hearing the word of God: the voice is the principal vehicle of intelligence: vox consonamenti. A voice from heaven announced the advent of Messiah.

In reading Ben David's minute re-

searches into the testimony of the Fathers to the text of the Heavenly Witnesses, &c. &c., one is inclined to assent to his propositions; but, on reflection, the texture of his argument proves too subtle and complicate to retain the lasting acquiescence of the mind in his ingenious hypothesis. Thus it fared with a reader of Plato's dialogue on the immortality of the soul. . . . When Hector lay prostrate in the dust, every Grecian warrior rushed forward to thrust his spear at the Trojan hero. Porson concludes his examination of this topic with the following decisive observations:—"In short, if this verse be really genuine, notwithstanding its absence from all the visible Greek MSS. except two; one of which awkwardly translates the verse from the Latin, and the other transcribes it from a printed book; notwithstanding its absence from all the versions, except the Vulgate, and even from many of the best and oldest MSS. of the Vulgate; notwithstanding the deep and dead silence of all the Greek writers down to the thirteenth, and most of the Latins down to the middle of the eighth century; if, in spite of all these objections, it be still genuine, no part of Scripture whatsoever can be proved either spurious or genuine; and Satan has been permitted, for many centuries, miraculously to banish the finest passage in the New Testament from the eyes and memories of almost all the Christian authors, translators and transcribers." Vain are the subtilties of sophistry, and even the surmises of probability in comparison with the "positive facts of this historical deduction." *Geram tibi morem, et ea, quæ vis, ut potero, explicabo: nec tamen quasi Pythius Apollo, certa ut sint et fixa quæ dixero: sed ut homunculus unus e multis, probabilia conjectura sequens.* *Tusc. Quæst. i. 9.*

Finally, to revert to the beginning of John's Gospel, the Evangelist is not chargeable with the indulgence of such an extravagant hyperbole as to announce the metamorphosis of a speech into a living agent, the speaker; or to insinuate that the Logos was transformed from an attribute into the being of the immutable Jehovah; while in reality his principal design was to introduce the new dispensation,

in its native * dignity, as the offspring of heaven, "endued with the sanctity of reason;" and the oracle of eternal truth, pronounced with divine authority by the Son of God.

WILLIAM EVANS.

*Todmorden,
July 10, 1826.*

SIR,
A WRITER in the last Number of the Monthly Repository signing himself J. G., (pp. 341, 342,) has assumed a position to me quite unexpected, and I think untenable. If (as he says) I am mistaken in my premises and wrong in my conclusions, my error is very perfect and complete. I have asserted 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; between the man who receives the word of revelation and him who rejects it, there can exist no religious sympathy. Our blessed *Master* and his disciples drew the line of *separation* between them in the strongest manner." No, replies J. G., they did not do any such thing; they could not, for there were no such people then in existence as the present class of Unbelievers—I mean conscientious, inquiring Unbelievers. Now it is to me wholly incomprehensible how he became acquainted with this circumstance, whence he obtained his information that there were no inquiring, conscientious Unbelievers in the time of Jesus and the apostles. I am strongly inclined to be of the contrary opinion. We read of some who said, in the time of our Lord's personal ministry, "He is a good man." The hearers of Paul at Athens brought him unto Areopagus, that he might have a fair and public hearing. Agrippa confessed, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." What are the indications of character here given? I cannot imagine that these persons were less anxious or less conscientious in their inquiries than those gentlemen in our enlightened times, who, not satisfied with the credit of superior sagacity, wish to arrogate to themselves likewise all the sincerity and honesty of their party.

* Vide Lowth's Isaiah lv. 10, 11.

This sophistical distinction is brought forward to prove that Christ and his apostles have not drawn a line of separation between believers and unbelievers; but in order to render it effective, positive evidence should be produced that they themselves have laid down *the distinction*. J. G. has completely neutralized his own argument; for allowing what he says to be correct, that no such persons as modern Unbelievers existed, he has still no just ground of opposition to my assertion; he can only appeal to our want of information on the subject, and thus make our ignorance the foundation of our knowledge. Is it not a more rational method to leave all conjectures as to what the Founder of our religion might or might not have done under any given circumstances, and to form our opinions from what he actually did say and do? J. G. has adopted the first mode, and I the last. I have simply said, that a line of separation is drawn between *him who receives and him who rejects* the word of revelation. Others may make what refined distinctions they please, and endeavour to explain away the force of the declaration by curious conjectures and ingenious suppositions, but the declaration itself still stands, "He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be condemned."

I was rather surprised that, after the explanation I have given in a former paper, your correspondent should deem it necessary to put the case which he has imagined; but since he has put it, I will give him a full and distinct reply. If such a person as the one he describes, a believer in God but not in revelation, a worshiper of God but not through Christ, an expectant of immortality but not by the resurrection of Jesus, thinks fit to join in a service, the whole of which is founded and conducted on principles which he rejects, let him do it; it is his own concern. But whilst I say this, I am not forbidden to tell him that I think his conduct absurd and inconsistent, nor ought he to complain of me for telling him so; on the contrary, he ought to be obliged to me for my honesty, though he may smile at my weakness.

Had the Unbeliever always conducted himself amongst us in that

modest, quiet and teachable spirit which your correspondent depicts, there would have been far greater reason for censuring my remarks; but when we see him assuming that as a right which was granted him as a favour (I merely take up the case suggested); instead of being anxious to increase his own faith, exerting himself to undermine the faith of others; taking advantage of his admission amongst us to persuade our members that there is no important difference between his principles and ours; accepting of office in the management of our concerns, and thus placing himself on a perfect equality with us in the eyes of the world; lifting up his voice in our deliberations and not hesitating to advise and to teach; then I do think that Christ himself would justify the members of his church in saying, "You have availed yourself of our kindness to corrupt our constitution; we admitted you to learn, and you wish to teach; we *pitied** you as a stranger to the faith, and now you interfere with the government of the family. Permit us to remind you of the tone and temper in which you first addressed us; we have no objection to your attendance in the lecture-room, but it is unbecoming to intrude further; it is unbecoming in you to propose it, and the institutions of our Founder forbid us to permit it." This exclusion from Christian fellowship, this distinction between members and mere hearers, will, perhaps, appear very ridiculous to J. G. and to those who admit the force of his reasoning on the formation of Christian societies. He asks this question, "Seeing that Christ is the Founder, the Legislator, and Supreme Head of the Christian Church, can we be justified in saying, We are a society of Christians; we have *formed ourselves* into a society to enjoy the privileges of his gospel?" What is it in this sentence that is objected to? The expression which J. G. has put in italics? How is any society to come into existence unless by a number of *individuals forming themselves into a society*? I entertain the opinion that

* "Such a person is rather an object of compassion than of indignation." J. G.'s letter, p. 342.

a Christian Church is a church or society of Christians; how can such a Church be established in a district where none such at present exists, but where there are a few individual, unconnected believers? They must *form themselves* into a society on some common principle. That principle, it appears, is "Faith in Christ." But if we are not justified in forming societies of *Christians only* as far as the object can be accomplished, will J. G. inform me what authority he has for forming a society of that heterogeneous description which he pleads for in the name of Christ, and dignifying it with the title of a Christian Church? Twice has the question been put by me, and it still remains unanswered by my opponents: what are our societies to be? Again I put it—What is a Christian Church? Who are its members? What are its laws; and to what end is it formed? My idea of a Christian Church, generally, I have given above. Into such a church it seems improper to admit any but those who will make "the confession of Christ"

J. G. objects to this confession on account of its vagueness. "Deists may confess Christ to be a good and pious man." No, not so. They may, indeed, admit *Jesus* to have been a good man, but to confess *Christ*, (*the Messiah*,) would reduce them pretty nearly to the ancient level, and make "Unbeliever" almost synonymous with "hypocrite."

A few desultory remarks, and I have done. "The most important letter," did not appear so to me. Admitting the existence of such pious, devout Deists as are there described, I grant the propriety of their being tolerated in the congregation as hearers, but any thing further than this I deprecate as a gross abuse of Christian liberty. I beg leave to remind T. C. H. (p. 289), that he had not the least shadow of authority for saying that I had a particular reference to one case, the only one with which he was acquainted. The confidence of his assertion not a little surprised me. W. J. has, I apprehend, furnished himself with sufficient employment if he reply to the papers already called forth by his letter. To him, therefore, I have only to observe, that he has now, perhaps, discovered that the

language of exultation and triumph was rather premature; that the opinion of personal acquaintance is not the voice of the public, and that "*the well-known liberality*" of the Unitarian body is neither scepticism nor indifference. On the subject of Anti-supernaturalism, see a paper signed R. A. M., Vol. XX. p. 88.

N. J.

SIR,
WITH pleasure I observe the attention which Mr. Jones's letter, (pp. 72, 73,) on "Unbelievers in Unitarian Chapels," has attracted. I rejoice that his view of the question has been seconded by so many of your correspondents, and am convinced, that the tendency of the discussion, however Mr. Jones may have been misinterpreted, is to put the matter on its proper basis.

It is said that the majority in all our congregations being believers, the inconvenience of attending on our worship must be on the side of the Deist. Generally it may be so, but not always. Are there no Unitarian pulpits (the cases I know are rare) open to Deistical preachers; in the cant phrase of the day, to Anti-supernaturalists; to men, in short, who reject the most material facts respecting the revelation by Jesus Christ? What becomes of the argument urged by your correspondent J. G., (p. 341,) that "the alarm about Deists gaining the ascendancy in our congregations is surely unfounded? We can have no such apprehension." Is it not "gaining the ascendancy" to mount the pulpit, and conduct Deistical worship in a Christian temple? Has J. G. himself never been the medium by which this very "ascendancy" has been gained? What avails it to say, "I regret equally with Mr. Jones the prevalence of scepticism, and would do every thing in my power to check the progress of Deistical opinions"? I reflect on the motives of no one. I speak not of character, nor of any of those endowments of head and heart which may render a man estimable in our eyes as a friend, or agreeable as a moralist. Such arguments would weigh little if applied to the case of a devout *orthodox* minister, who should gain the "ascendancy" in a Unitarian pulpit, and thence offend the ears of his

audience by his conscientious expressions of *over-belief*. How is it that to *non-belief* our sympathetic feelings of liberality (that much abused word) are principally extended?

One remark about "Tests and Confessions," on which Mr. Jones has, I think, been much misrepresented. Who has proposed any? A verbal creed was never thought of that I am aware. The "confession of Christ" is surely not so "exceedingly vague" as J. G. supposes. The Deist, by profession, (and to him alone does our argument refer,) is seldom misunderstood. He usually thinks it right to proclaim and glory in his opinions. What farther "Test or Confession" is required than this?

I am constrained to oppose another of J. G.'s positions. I contend that it is the faith of "*our church*," as Christians, which must, *at all events*, be supported inviolate. We do *not* wish to "cast a stigma" on any set of men. We do *not* desire to say to the Deist, as J. G. has it, "You shall enjoy none of the privileges of the gospel in common with us." But if the parties *themselves* reject these "privileges," we do say, "However in ordinary matters we may incline to give you the right hand of fellowship, as officers of '*our church*,' and leaders of our devotions, our duty and feelings as Christian believers impel us most earnestly to protest against you."

Let us, then, whether ministers or people, with all the humility that becomes us, as disciples of Christ, strive to keep the "faith once delivered to the saints;" swerving neither to the right hand nor the left, out of courtesy to any man. Where called upon to rebuke, let us aim to do it in love; where to part, to part in peace; holding fast our integrity, through evil and good report, as sincere and consistent followers of a crucified Master.

A CHRISTIAN UNITARIAN.

SIR,

IN the last Number of your Repository, (p. 290,) there appeared a letter signed E. C. on which I beg leave to offer the following observations. The author commences with remarking, "that a great deal of eloquence has been wasted on the side of pseudo-liberality, and that much

needless vituperation has been heaped on Mr. Jones." I would by no means attempt to excuse illiberal remarks, if any of Mr. Jones's antagonists have made such, but I think E. C. has yet to learn, that on all subjects of human inquiry the expression of opinion is, or ought to be, free; that others have the same right to give their ideas of Mr. Jones's views as he had to declare them, and that eloquence is not to be considered as *wasted* when engaged in supporting the principles of universal charity and enlightened toleration. E. C. continues, "Mr. Jones's object appears to be only to prevent those who are not Christians from being associated in church fellowship with those who are, and becoming thus identified with them; to make both *Christians* and *Deists* more consistent with their profession." Now, before proceeding further, it is necessary we should be agreed as to the term *Christian*, as used in this instance. By Mr. Jones, it evidently seems to refer to a believer in the *miracles*, or to imply a matter of faith only. Now, it appears to me that no correctness of religious *opinion alone* can fully entitle any one to the Christian name; that a real Christian must be one in disposition and in character as well as in theory, and that such title can only be properly conceded to him whose belief is evinced in the excellence of his conduct and the daily virtues of his life. On the other hand, it can hardly be denied, that any person who cultivates the virtues enjoined by our Saviour has a claim, and that a powerful one, to the title of Christian. Many persons govern their lives by the precepts of Christ, who may not have fully settled their faith on all, nor perhaps, in some cases, even on the leading evidences of Christianity; they revere his name, they obey his commands, and they leave what appears to them to be difficult or abstruse to more assured or more cultivated minds. This may be considered either weakness or diffidence, inconsistency or humility, according to the strict or candid construction which others may choose to put upon it; but no one, I think, will deny that there may be kindness, goodness and benevolence, where there is also doubt and anxiety, nay, even

where there is distrust or unbelief on certain points; and is it not possible that this imperfect Christian, feeling his way in darkness and sorrow, may be an object of as great, if not greater, approbation in the sight of his Maker, than one who has faith to remove mountains, and yet has not the *spirit* of his Master? For, after all, what was the test used by our Saviour, if *he* is to be quoted as the approver of tests? Was it not a test of *conduct* rather than of *opinion*? Is it not expressly said, that without charity all belief is of no avail? And does he not on all occasions make virtue, integrity and the fruits of religion as unfolded in holiness of heart and life, his criterion? In short, has he not stated in the most explicit language and upon the most solemn occasion, that the *test* by which he will decide upon the happiness or misery of every individual of mankind, will not be whether he *believed* in certain articles of faith, even though that faith was sufficient to cast out spirits and do many wonderful things, but whether he had clothed the naked, visited those who were sick and in prison, and performed all those *duties of humanity* which it was the great object of his mission to inculcate? When he was asked what must be done to gain eternal life, what was his answer? Was it an injunction to *believe* in certain doctrines or endeavour to understand certain mysteries? Was it not simply, "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments"?* And when the young man pleaded that he had already kept all those things, what was the addition our Saviour required? "If thou wilt be *perfect*, go and sell that thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me:" that is, cultivate benevolent and generous feelings, and copy my *example*. We are well aware that it may here be objected to our argument, that there are many passages in Scripture which appear to favour the sufficiency of faith alone; such as the expression of Paul and Silas, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved;"†

"That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. He that believeth on him is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God."* We imagine it would be difficult to produce passages that seem more to favour the sufficiency of faith than the foregoing; yet a very little examination will convince us, that this faith, available to salvation, is by no means a dead faith, or a mere matter of speculative opinion, but a reformatory and living faith, immediately called into action in purifying the heart and the life, and that any abstract, intellectual belief only is far short of the faith required by Jesus Christ. Let us take, for instance, the last-quoted passage, and we shall find it explained so as to favour this construction by the context. The next three verses are, "*And THIS is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, BECAUSE THEIR DEEDS WERE EVIL. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.*"† Is it not here evident that the condemnation alluded to in the first instance, "because he hath not believed," &c., means, because he would not believe *on account of the depravity of his conduct*, being well aware that the commandments of Christ and the purity of his law would require the instant sacrifice of his favourite sins, and expose them in all their deformity before him? This is surely a very different sort of unbelief to that which arises from the peculiar conformation of a person's mind, or from his not being able to perceive the truth. It is an unbelief that justly subjects its possessor to condemnation, because it is voluntarily and obstinately retained against the evidence of clearer light, and intended as the cover and excuse of evil deeds. If passages are thus examined in connexion with the previous and succeeding ones, it will

* Matt. xix. 17, 20, 21.

† Acts xvi. 31.

* John iii. 16, 18. † Ib. 19—21.

seldom or never be found that faith and works are separated, even though they may not be mentioned together, for a vital faith infers also good works as its fruits, and good works include a right spirit and a pure doctrine as necessary to their production. But if texts of Scripture are quoted apart from the connexion in which they stand, there is no doctrine so inconsistent but it may find some support, and even opposite opinions might in this manner be defended. It is therefore clear that a *belief* in the *evidences* of Christianity can only be the *means* and not the *end*; and whoever attempts to rest in it, as in itself a sufficient claim to the Christian title, or available to salvation, will render nugatory many of the most solemn and important declarations of Jesus Christ, which demonstrate that Christianity is *spiritual* and *practical*, and not merely intellectual and speculative. At the same time it cannot be denied, that the purer the faith the greater safeguard there is for the conduct, and we would therefore by no means depreciate those investigations or those virtuous endeavours to improve in religious knowledge, which are the surest means of enlightening and strengthening the moral perceptions. We gladly acknowledge the authority of the miracles and their sanction to the divine mission of Christ, though at the same time we believe that from want of information, diffidence, self-distrust, or other causes, some may never have formed a decided opinion on this subject, and yet be very sincere *practical* Christians, acting up to the light they perceive, and fully sensible of the responsibility they lie under to their Creator. Mr. Jones's *test* then will not answer. He will never be able to bend differing minds to one belief. Some will say they understand and believe the miracles, others that they take them on trust, but cannot comprehend them, while many will acknowledge, if sincere, that they scarcely know their own degree of belief in them. No doubt there would be also many cultivated and religious persons who would be able to give a reason for the faith that is in them, but as a *test*, even amongst Unitarians themselves, or amongst *any* religious

body, it never could become general. Indeed, supposing mere *professions* of religious opinion were to be admitted as tests, no doctrines have ever been pointed out in which all persons can be expected to agree; insomuch that they may be considered as means of dissension or of hypocrisy, rather than of union. Even Mr. Noah Jones and his advocate E. C. entertain different opinions on this subject, and while one of them thinks the candidate should declare his belief in the miracles, the other thinks he should conform himself to the ceremony of the Lord's Supper, with both of which a person may comply for various reasons, while a good life is an evidence of sincerity there can be little occasion to doubt. As to the subject of Unbelievers attending Unitarian places of worship, it may be remarked, that so far from its being peculiar to *our* congregations, it is in reality the case with most if not *all* other sects, and it is well known that a great number of those who attend the Established Church do not recognize several of its most important articles. Nor are they on this account, while their intentions are upright and their conduct moral, to be stigmatized with hypocrisy; for the fact is, that they are placed in a difficult and painful situation, in which allowances ought to be made for some hesitation and even inconsistency; while their conformity, as long as they perform the various duties of life, ought rather to be considered an advantage than a disgrace to any religious community. In conclusion, we may reasonably ask, how are we to make converts to our own clearer light and purer faith, if we close our doors on all who are not of our own manner of thinking—if the truth as it is in Jesus, according to our perceptions, is to be confined entirely to ourselves? Would it not be more consonant to the spirit of our Saviour, instead of excluding others, to go forth even to them and proclaim in every corner of the earth the blessed tidings of salvation—to inform, to explain, to enlighten, and to make the limit of our charity and our exertions the devotion of our fortunes and our lives? Surely if there be consolation in the benevolence of our principles, peace in their simpli-

city and purity, and a renovating power in their spiritual influences—if there be indeed a value in their independence and integrity, shall we not endeavour to impart them to others? And shall we consider any opportunity trivial, which affords us this important privilege? Where else are they to hear these tidings? In the complicated articles and creeds of the Establishment, the superstitions of the Catholics, or the gloomy and distressing creed of the Calvinists? No; by these they have probably been revolted, by these they may have been driven on the rock of scepticism, and when they turn their weary footsteps to our gates, shall we meet them with a religious test equivalent to an order for their departure? In vain does E. C. exclaim, that Mr. Jones would not prevent Unbelievers from partaking of the benefits of public worship; he *would* thus deprive them of the best of all benefits, the opportunity of hearing what we humbly conceive to be the unadorned and unperverted truth of Scripture: but I repeat the remark, that it will not be; and more than this, I am inclined to believe, that if such a restriction actually took place, such would be the painful circumstances it would involve, that the natural candour and liberality of Mr. Jones would cause him to be one of the first persons to ask for its repeal.

AN UNITARIAN CHRISTIAN.

SIR,
I WAS much pleased with observing in the Session of Parliament of 1824, that the Gentlemen of the House of Commons and the Government were alive to the evil of requiring declarations inconsistent with truth. The occasion was a motion of Mr. Hume's for abolishing the declaration demanded of an officer buying or selling a commission, relating to price, &c., "which declaration the circumstances of the service compel him to violate." All persons cried out

against the practice, and Mr. Hume withdrew his motion on the assurance of the agents of government, that the abolition of the obnoxious declaration was under consideration.

On reading the debate I remember asking involuntarily, "Is the honour of a soldier a stricter obligation to truth than the duty of a Christian and a Christian minister? Yet the students at our Universities are compelled to subscribe articles of faith which they do not believe, which they cannot believe, for they know nothing of them, and our clergy are required to subscribe the same articles, and to declare publicly their hearty assent and consent to all and every thing contained in the Book of Common Prayer, though it is notorious, and in the nature of things must be, that many of them do not approve some things in the much-bruited Book, nor believe some of these ever-to-be-remembered articles."

I cannot but think, Sir, that there wants nothing but the exposure, for the correction, of the evil. Let the case be brought before Parliament, and again and again, and if necessary every year, and it is impossible that a system of such oppression on the one side, and hypocrisy on the other, should be much longer endured. We should not, I fear, muster so many petitioning clergy as on the former clerical petition; but there must be many who feel the yoke gall their consciences, and not a few who would be bold enough to come forward and complain.

The whole community is interested in this matter, for it affects the national honour and the virtue of our posterity; and Dissenters from the Established Church, of all classes, are peculiarly concerned in the removal of tests, which shut out their children from the proper education of Englishmen, and from the honours and rewards of superior talents and diligence.

A NON-SUBSCRIBER.

REVIEW.

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

ART. I.—*Discourses, Doctrinal and Practical; delivered in Essex-street Chapel.* By Thomas Belsham, Pastor of the Congregation 8vo. pp. 496. R. Hunter. 1826.

MR. BELSHAM has been long known through a large circle of readers as a doctrinal and controversial writer on theology, but he has been no less celebrated in the smaller circle of his hearers as a preacher. At the instance of many of these, he publishes this volume; alleging as one reason of his compliance with the solicitations of his friends, that he is “ in a great measure incapacitated by age and infirmities from public service.” (Advert.) The Discourses are both “ Doctrinal and Practical,” but the latter more than the former; and considering the excellence of some of the “ Practical” Sermons, and also the notoriety of the preacher’s doctrines, we almost wish the whole series had been confined to moral and devotional subjects.

The Discourses are twenty in number. Sermon* I. (on 2 Cor. v. 7) is entitled “ The Tendency of the Christian Dispensation to enlarge the Comprehension of the Mind.” The thoughts and argument and language of this discourse are somewhat philosophical. The following paragraph is the key to the preacher’s system, as stated in this and other discourses :

“ There is ONE Being in the universe who beholds all things, past, present, and to come, in one comprehensive survey. Of his absolute perfection we can judge only by analogy to our own limited capacities and powers. He looks at once through all created existence, and sees the whole course of events taking place in regular succession, at their appointed season, in conformity to that great and glorious plan, which was arranged by infinite wisdom at the suggestion of infinite benevolence : and which being carried into effect by almighty power, can-

not in any part of it fail of success, and must ultimately terminate in the grand result which it was his sovereign will to accomplish, the virtue, order, and happiness, of all his rational creation. In his eye, therefore, evil itself is absorbed in the immense preponderance of good which it is calculated to produce : and the great Creator, when he surveys his works, pronounces them all good ; declares that all are correspondent to his sublime and magnificent idea ; and in the sure prospect, the clear and distinct view of that infinite mass of happiness which will be the ultimate result of his infinitely wise and benevolent operations, he is at all times infinitely happy.”—Pp. 4—6.

We not only agree with, but admire the observation, that

“ The simplicity and spirituality of the Christian dispensation, its entire freedom from ritual incumbrance, the sublimity and importance of its doctrine, the correctness, purity and perfection of its morality, and the infinitude of its object, all concur to prove, that this is the last of the moral dispensations of God to mankind ; that it is wisely adapted to the improving state of the world ; that it is calculated to accelerate that improvement ; that there is great reason to believe, that, as the world becomes more enlightened and more wise, the Christian religion, in its original purity and truth and beauty, will be more generally received, so that, in the end, the prophecies which announce its ultimate prosperity and success shall be literally accomplished ; and ‘ the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.’ ”—Pp. 19, 20.

In the application of the discourse, the preacher takes higher ground than is attained by the experience of every Christian. He remarks that “ the man who habitually regards himself as born to an infinite expectation,”

1. must be always cheerful and happy,
2. possesses love to God and is devoted to his service,
3. has a copious source of benevolence the most active and disinterested,
4. is reconciled to all that happens,
5. is restrained from “ exorbitant desire of inferior, and especially of criminal gratifications,” (he is surely restrained from *all* desire

* We use both the words “ Sermons” and “ Discourses.” The one is in the title-page and the other is the running title.

of these,) and, 6. exhibits steadiness and dignity of character, and consistency and stability in virtue.

Ser. II. is entitled, from the text, (1 John iv. 16,) "God is Love." This "glorious truth" implies, the preacher argues, 1. That love is an attribute of God. 2. Love exists in God in *its greatest* perfection. (Are not the words in italics superfluous?) 3. All the counsels and purposes of God are prompted by love. 4. The works of God, and all the dispensations of his government towards his creatures, are the fruits and effects of love. 5. Love is the attribute and character by which he chooses to be made known, and to be regarded by man. 6. The laws of God originate in benevolence, and love is his express and chief command.

We cannot forbear quoting the following animated description of Creation:

"*Creation* is the commencement and the chief of the works of God; and it originates in his benevolent purpose. Behold the fair and beautiful world which we inhabit. Contemplate the various substances of which the earth consists; the atmosphere which surrounds it, the waters which encompass it, the fire which glows in various forms within it, and upon it; the multitude and beautiful variety of vegetables with which it is clothed and adorned. Turn your attention to the living beings by which it is inhabited. All nature swarms with life. Millions and millions of animals, from the half-reasoning elephant, from the huge leviathan, to the worm, the insect, the animalcule, discernible only by the assistance of the best instruments; beasts, and birds, and fishes, and insects, and reptiles, in all their various animated forms, inhabit their respective elements, and triumph in their existence. Superior to these, and lords (*lord*) of this lower creation, is man; who, in his various tribes, is scattered over the vast regions of the habitable globe, erect in form, endued with an intelligent principle, with god-like capacities and powers, adapted by constitution to the climate in which he resides, and attached by habit to the circumstances in which he is fixed. Inanimate nature yields to his plastic hand. The vegetable creation grows and blooms, and ripens for his convenience and use; and inferior animals bow to his yoke and acknowledge his authority. Behold the starry orbs, glittering like spangles, innumerable in the vast expanse of heaven. Conceive each star a sun: and each sun

as the centre, the fountain of light and heat to the many habitable worlds, as large, or, it may be, larger than the planet in which we dwell, equally crowded with inhabitants, and equally provided with means for their sustenance and comfortable accommodation. Extend your views still further. Conceive of suns and worlds far beyond what the most penetrating eye, assisted by the most powerful instruments, have ever yet been able to discover, or ever will. Give your imagination its utmost scope. Conceive of thousands of worlds, and clusters of suns and systems beyond these: of millions and millions remoter still than those. Pursue the thought till imagination faints under the immense idea; you will still fall infinitely short of the vast and boundless universe of being. Two questions naturally occur to the mind upon this magnificent survey. Who was the author of this stupendous fabric? And for what purpose was it raised, and crowded with myriads of inhabitants? Reason suggests a reply to the former, and the text contains the answer to the second of these interesting inquiries. God is the sole architect of this stately frame. And God is love. Infinite, immutable love: the boundless desire to communicate happiness to a boundless multitude of beings, is the only conceivable motive which could induce an all-perfect and happy Being, to the production of this magnificent effect."—Pp. 35—38.

The IIIrd Ser. (from 2 Cor. vi. 18) is on the "Paternal Character of God," which implies, 1. love, 2. protection, 3. instruction, 4. discipline, 5. forbearance and forgiveness, 6. readiness to hear and answer.

Ser. IV. (from Rom. viii. 14) is entitled "The Spirit of Christianity, a Filial Spirit," and a filial spirit is shewn to include reverence and love, desire of instruction, cheerful obedience and fear of offending, humble submission to salutary discipline, delight in communion with God, and finally, a patient expectation of the promised inheritance.

Ser. V. (from Psa. xlviii. 9) is entitled "The Loving-kindness of God recollected at the Close of the Year." The preacher meditates, I. upon the general loving-kindness of the Supreme Being, as supreme, universal, under the direction of unerring wisdom, and unchangeable and everlasting; II. upon particular instances of the loving-kindness of God, especially in connexion with the season of

Christinas and the close of the year. We meet, p. 102, with the doubtful phrase, "the Almighty Regent of the Universe."

The VIth Ser. is on "Resignation to the Will of God, after the Example of Jesus" (from John xii. 27, 28). This interesting subject is introduced with some excellent observations on the internal evidence of the truth of the gospel history, of which the following is the substance:

"The evangelist, by a concise, artless relation of simple facts, without any observation or comment of his own, has here exhibited our honoured master as a pattern of piety and devotion, far beyond the ordinary limits of human attainment: a devotion the most affecting and sublime, and at the same time at an infinite remove both from the ignorance and folly of a mean and blind superstition, and from the wild ravings and the still more odious familiarities of a gross and fanatical enthusiasm. I will venture to say that no one, whose mind had not been enlightened with the purest and most exalted conceptions of God, and whose heart had not been moulded into the most entire subjection to his will, would have been capable of imagining or delineating such a character as this. The evangelist would never have formed the conception of an incident, so unusual, and at the same time so natural, and which so beautifully illustrates the dignity and the devoted piety of the mind of Jesus, had not the event really occurred. It is an incident which in the reflecting mind must excite the highest idea of our Lord's character, and in the pious mind an earnest desire to resemble it; while the truly humble spirit will not dare to hope that it shall ever equal the great original."—Pp. 120—122.

Mr. Belsham, after Mr. Wakefield, reads the second clause in the text interrogatively. He thus explains and paraphrases the passage:

"Now, saith he, is my soul troubled. The scenes of agony through which I am destined to pass, are so near at hand, and so exceedingly formidable, that in the immediate prospect of them human nature recoils, and my heart trembles. And what shall I say?—What prayer shall I offer up to my heavenly Father, who heareth me always, at this alarming crisis?—Shall I listen to flesh and blood?—Shall I desert the honourable cause in which I am embarked?—Shall I ask to be excused from the dreadful

conflict?—Shall I say, Father, save me from this hour?

"This is evidently our Lord's meaning, and the clause ought to be read with an interrogation. It is not honourable to our Lord's character, it is not consistent with the usual firm and dignified tenor of his mind, to suppose that he first offers an unqualified prayer to be excused from suffering, and then immediately retracts it. His meaning in this brief but interesting soliloquy unquestionably is, to express the firmness of his resolution, and his entire devotedness to the will of God, in the discharge of his mission: q. d. What prayer will it become me to offer in these trying circumstances?—Will it suit my character and office—will it agree with the glorious prospects which are now opening before me, and the immortal prize which I have in view, to listen to the suggestions of appalled and fainting nature? I cannot act so base, so unworthy a part. If I were now to decline the cup of suffering, I should defeat the main purpose of my mission. It was for this cause that I came to this hour. It was that by my death I might ratify the covenant of love; that I might redeem mankind from the bondage of error, idolatry, and vice, and might save them from wrath and ruin; that I was sent to preach the gospel, and was empowered to authenticate my divine mission by signs and miracles: to accomplish, therefore, this gracious purpose of reconciling the world to God, and of bringing many sons to glory, I willingly submit to all that it is necessary previously to undergo: I refuse not to die: I shrink not from any suffering, however severe. I have only one petition to offer: Father, glorify thy name; fulfil all thy good pleasure in thy devoted servant. I came into the world to do thy will, for that will is mine. Let God be honoured, and I am well pleased: whether it be by labour or suffering, by life or death."—Pp. 124—127.

The title of the VIIth Ser. is "The Profit of Labour;" the text is Prov. xiv. 23. This is a very ingenious discourse, and quite out of the beaten track of the pulpit. Labour, the preacher shews, is of three kinds, corporeal, intellectual, moral; each of which is profitable in its measure: bodily labour is conducive to health, competence, cheerfulness, reputation and virtue; mental labour enriches the understanding, strengthens the intellectual powers, leads to useful discoveries, promotes true religion; moral labour (which seems to be antici-

pated in the last head) is profitable with relation both to knowledge and practice.

There is true wisdom in the following observations :

“ The ancients represented Labour as guardian to the temple of Virtue. And, certainly, nothing is more injurious to moral principle than indolence, especially in young persons, whose minds are flexible, and whose moral habits are not firmly fixed. For a young man to be idle, and at the same time virtuous, is a moral impossibility. No excellence of education, no truth of principle, no force of habit, can stand against the temptations of indolence. But if young persons are fully employed in occupations that are honourable and useful, and which engage their whole time and attention, habits of virtue, industry, and peace, will be gradually and insensibly formed ; or, if they are already begun, they will be improved, confirmed, and riveted for life. ‘ In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat bread,’ is no curse upon man in general, as human nature is at present constituted. There is indeed a labour which grinds, oppresses and overwhelms. But such labour is not often necessary. And in general the virtue of a character is proportioned to its activity, and unremitting industry in some honourable and useful employment.”—Pp. 150, 151.

Is not the title of Ser. VIII. quaint? It is “ Tekel,” taken of course from the text, Dan. v. 27. The sermon is solemn, impressive and well calculated for usefulness. The introduction is historical, and the tale is well told. The subject—God’s cognizance of human actions—is discussed in a series of observations. “ First, the Supreme Being forms a very exact estimate of the actions and characters of men. Secondly, many weigh much in their own estimation and in that of the world, who are of light account in the judgment of God. Thirdly, this is a very lamentable case. And, fourthly, sooner or later it will appear to be so.”

These observations would be made weightier by being condensed. The 3rd and 4th might be gathered into one, even if they might not be advantageously introduced into the 2nd.

The preacher is not afraid of indulging a familiar remark, tending to a moral purpose :

“ The reported reflection of a foreign

princess to her governess, ‘ I can’t think how it is that I never find any body always in the right but myself,’ is an opinion entertained by many who would not perhaps be so ready to avow it.”—P. 179.

The text would have justified some observations upon the morality of states and the infatuation of national vice ; but, perhaps, the sermon is more usefully occupied with the case of individuals, to whose consciences the general doctrine of responsibility is forcibly applied, as in the following example :

“ But there is something peculiarly affecting in the case of those, who, in consequence of the sycophancy of the world, and of their own prejudice and self-love, flatter themselves that they are perfectly secure, that their state is safe, that their characters are approved, and that all is well, while their heart is not right in the sight of God. They who are wanting in the divine balances, and who are conscious of their defect, must feel a perpetual stimulus to repentance and reformation. Concerning such there is always room to hope for conversion and improvement. But they who are ignorant of their true character and state, and who hope to pass as gold, when they are only dross, these are not aware of their danger and misery, and never think of making provision for their escape. Thus they run heedlessly on in the career of folly, confirm their vices, aggravate their guilt, and secure their ruin. Proportionate to their self delusion must be their surprise and terror, when they come to be informed of the truth of their condition. Ever accustomed to think favourably of themselves, and to hear the applause of others, what must be their astonishment and dismay, when their eyes are open to a just sense of their character and state ; when they are roused from the dream of self-delusion ; when the foundation of their confidence vanishes into air ; and being placed in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity !”—Pp. 182, 183.

Ser. IX. (from 1 Cor. x. 31) is entitled “ True Religion distinguished from Error and Superstition.” The introduction consists of some judicious and valuable remarks upon the phraseology of the New Testament, and especially of the Epistles of St. Paul, the misinterpretation of which has given birth to so many and such serious errors. Excellent, however, as these are, we scarcely know why

they are placed under this text, or at the head of this discourse. The exposition and application of the text are found towards the end of the Sermon.

Amongst the errors of the Christian world, Mr. Belsham reckons a reliance upon the "mediation" of Christ, "as a means of acceptance with God," on which subject, he says, "not a word is advanced from the beginning to the end of the New Testament" (pp. 196, 197). He must surely mean to be understood of the mediation of Christ according to the Calvinistic sense. Of a part of our Lord's office of mediation or delegation, he himself says in another discourse (XV. p. 355),

"The Christian Scriptures reveal the interesting fact, that the Lord Jesus Christ will be the delegate of his heavenly Father, to hold the grand assize, and to occupy the seat of judgment on that all-important day; of which delegation God hath given the fullest assurance, in that he hath raised him from the dead."

We should hesitate in setting down to the account of "superstition" the persuasion, that Christian teachers "are under peculiar obligation to sanctity of conduct and severity of morals" (p. 201): nothing appears to us plainer than that, according to the Apostle's doctrine, Rom. ii. 17, et seq., the criminality of bad actions is in the direct ratio of the knowledge and profession of virtue, and of the motives which must be resisted and violated in the commission of evil.

Ser. X. "The Character and Destiny of the Righteous and the Wicked," is an exposition and application of the first Psalm. It is a plain and useful discourse. In explaining the "destiny" of the "wicked," Mr. Belsham exhibits "the terrors of the law."

"The Analogy between Natural and Moral Disorders" (from Luke v. 31) is the title of Ser. XI. In less judicious hands than Mr. Belsham's this would have been a subject of questionable propriety. However treated, it is a humiliating topic.

Who does not envy Mr. Belsham's clear and bright views of the Divine government?

"Correct views of moral subjects will also manifest the perfect consis-

tency of moral agency and moral responsibility with the distinct foreknowledge and the overruling providence of God." Pp. 236, 237.

The preacher thus defines vice:

"The true definition of vice is that state of mind, or that modification of the habits and affections, which constitutes or tends to the greatest ultimate misery of the agent, or which detracts from or diminishes his greatest ultimate happiness."—P. 237.

Is not something wanted to make the definition perfectly Christian?

Ser. XII. is entitled "The Transitory Nature of the World and its Desires," and is from 1 John ii. 17. The Introduction is a very fine passage. The preacher, in explaining his text, seems to have had in his eye Dr. Doddridge's beautiful hymn upon the kindred passage in 1 Cor. vii. 31, one verse of which is in our judgment eminently poetic: we remember hearing the late Mr. Worthington quote it in the pulpit in his best manner, and with uncommon effect:

The empty pageant rolls along;
The giddy, unexperienc'd throng
Pursue it with enchanted eyes:
It passeth in swift march away,
Still more and more its charms decay,
Till the last gaudy colour dies.

The word "disgrace" is used in its etymological rather than its customary sense in the following sentence, p. 265: "Mortality is the *disgrace* of all things here below." May we add, that *here below* is one of the frequent inelegancies of pulpit composition?

The next Sermon, the XIIIth, is from the same text, but on a different subject, viz. "The Stability of the Good Man amidst the Changes of Life." The division of this Sermon is, unlike the excellent preacher's usual mode, smart and almost epigrammatic: "We have here a character described and a privilege annexed." P. 285. From a similar text we remember hearing a celebrated preacher amongst the Calvinistic Dissenters, yet living, announce his subject in this manner: "We shall shew the condition of the privilege, and the privilege of the condition."

The Sermon is what hearers are accustomed to call "very good:" the conclusion merits a higher and less hacknied epithet:

"He that doeth the will of God, abideth for ever. This is, indeed, an amazing thought, and worthy of the most serious attention. Behold yon marble statue—the wonder of ages: it still retains its beauty and perfection, it has retained them for centuries, while the frail original has long since mouldered away. But when a few more years or ages are passed, this also shall decay, and crumble into dust.—Mark that stupendous tower; how deep its foundation; how dense its walls; how lofty its battlements; how firm its structure! It has stood for ages; it promises to stand for ages to come. Yet the time is approaching when it will tumble into ruins. Behold the great mountains; their foundations in the centre of the earth; their summits piercing the clouds; they seem built for eternity, and bid defiance to age and time. Yet even these mountains, though deemed perpetual, shall depart; and the everlasting hills shall be removed.—Consider the foundations of the earth. Survey the pillars of the universe. How firm and durable they are! How many thousand years they have already subsisted! How many ten thousand more they are likely to stand! Yet there is a period advancing when these mighty pillars shall burst asunder, and universal ruin shall raise her standard upon the wreck of the creation. The heavens shall be folded up like a scroll; the elements shall be dissolved; the earth shall flee away; and the sea shall find no place. Nevertheless, amidst the universal consternation, the servant of God, he that hath done his Maker's will, remains undismayed. The Rock of Ages is immovable.—Upon that rock he stands; and views with a composed and undaunted eye the accomplishment of the great plan of Providence in the dissolution of the frame of nature.—Upon that rock he shall ever stand. And while time, and years, and ages roll on; while worlds dissolve and pass away; while stars, and suns, and systems, undergo the most awful and stupendous revolutions, he that hath done the will of God abides unmoved; his heart is fixed; his character is made perfect; his state is secure; his happiness is unchangeable. The eternal God is his refuge, his everlasting portion, and his exceeding great reward."—Pp. 301—303.

Ser. XIV., entitled "Death, the Last Enemy, Destroyed," from 1 Cor. xv. 26, is stated in the heading to have been "preached on the Lamented Death of Percival North, Esq." We take notice of this, in order to

remark that the exordium of the sermon contains the character of the deceased; a part of funeral discourses which is commonly reserved for the peroration: and, we confess, we prefer the usual plan, and for the plain reason that it is more likely to keep up the hearer's attention. If the most interesting portion of a sermon is brought forward at the commencement, the earnestness of an audience will droop before the close, and the effect of the sermon will be inverted.

A very high and we doubt not a justly deserved panegyric is pronounced upon Mr. North. The long life of this gentleman, who lived to his 86th year, is feelingly contrasted with the short date of existence allotted by Providence to a much-valued friend of the preacher's, who died a little before at the early age of 25, the Rev. T. B. Broadbent, (see Mon. Repos. XII. 690,) and whose funeral sermon was preached Nov. 9, 1817, at Essex Street. (See Mon. Repos. XIII. 1—4.)

The plan of this sermon is suggested by the words, which is the best of all divisions, "Death is an enemy—it is the last enemy—and this enemy shall be destroyed" (p. 311).

Mr. Belsham reads his text, "The last enemy shall be destroyed, even death." He says,

"The last enemy *that* shall be destroyed is death. This is a poor and spiritless translation, or rather mistranslation of the apostle's spirited and triumphant language. If all enemies are to be destroyed, it is comparatively of little consequence in what order of time they are destined to perish. But the apostle's words express an important proposition; they are a peremptory and triumphant declaration that death, the last enemy, *shall* be abolished and utterly exterminated."—P. 329.

Here, as in many other places, Mr. Belsham maintains explicitly and ably the doctrine of the restoration of the wicked to virtue and happiness. He conjectures that the apostle alludes to this event in the 23d verse of the chapter from which the text is taken. But we doubt whether the phrase, "they that are Christ's," can be made by any rational interpretation of the Apostle to include bad men who will fall under final condemnation! May not the sense of this chapter be, that

Christ will finish and crown his earthly dispensation by raising up all mankind from the grave and bringing in the state of rewards and punishments; that the righteous will enjoy their promised happiness, and the wicked endure their threatened and deserved misery, in whatever it may consist, for an age or definite period to follow, which will be the final age of the Messiah; that after this, the object of his mission being accomplished, he will deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father? Of the succeeding state it may not have been designed that any thing should be revealed; but there can be no doubt that the righteous will continue to be happy and growing in happiness; and the most benevolent heart may be satisfied to leave the rest of the human race to the uncovenanted mercies of God.

Ser. XV. (from Amos iv. 12) is on "The Duty of preparing to meet our God." This is a very serious devotional and practical sermon. The preacher urges the duty of meeting God in the course of his providence, in the ordinances of his worship, at death, and at his final tribunal.

The pleasing subject of the XVIth Sermon (from 1 Thess. iv. 17) is "The Future Life of the Righteous a Social State." The proposition is briefly proved and then amplified. A glowing description is given of the heavenly society. Mr. Belsham finds a place in this happy state for all virtuous men, even though they may have been unbelievers, and of the most daring kind (pp. 375, 376).

The following passage is painfully interesting, not excepting the close of it, which contains a conjecture that not a few would eagerly oppose:

"One cloud, one dark cloud, appears to overshadow the glorious prospect, and, partially at least, to deform its beauties. Some will be missing from that happy assembly who were once most intimately connected in the bonds of nature and affection. And the thought of the bliss which they have lost, and still more, of the bitter suffering to which they are condemned, must, one might imagine, cast a cloud upon the scene, and inflict a pang upon the bosom of the blessed.

"To alleviate this great apparent difficulty let it be considered,

"1. That the instinctive affections, whatever be their present intensity or

utility, having answered the purpose for which they were implanted, will probably have no existence in a future state.

"2. That the justice and wisdom, and even the benevolence of the Divine proceedings towards the sufferers themselves, will probably be so apparent, and the will of the righteous will be so absorbed in, and identified with, the governing will of God, that few or no painful feelings will be excited on account of those who, for a limited period, will suffer for their crimes; except perhaps a generous pity, in which the sense of pain is in a great measure absorbed in the feeling of benevolence.

"3. That probably the state of future punishment will bear no resemblance to those gross conceptions which many entertain, from the literal interpretation which they give to the figurative language of scripture. The state of punishment to which the wicked will be consigned, will no doubt be miserable, and even insupportable. It will probably consist chiefly in suffering the natural consequences of their own vicious and exorbitant passions, which will of themselves terminate in shame and misery. And by this salutary, but painful process, they may perhaps ultimately be reclaimed to virtue, and restored to peace. In the mean time, while these sources of agony remain in the breast, the place where they will exist is of little moment. All places are alike to a wounded spirit. A celestial paradise would to such an one be a place of torment. To me, therefore, the conjecture appears not improbable, that in the life to come the place in which the unrighteous will undergo their penal sentence, may be the same with that in which the righteous will enjoy their promised reward. And may we not be permitted to conjecture, that some portion at least of the happiness of the righteous may arise from generous and gradually successful exertions to reclaim their fallen and unhappy fellow-creatures? This supposition is at least as rational, and it is far less painful, than the vulgar creed concerning the torments of hell. And I am confident, that it is not less consistent with the doctrine of the New Testament."—Pp. 381—384.

Ser. XVII. (from Psa. cxxxix. 8) is entitled "The Presence of God in Heaven and Hell." By the last word the preacher means not the place of punishment, but, as he maintains it is used in the Old Testament, the grave, or the great repository of the dead. In the popular sense, however, he asserts the presence of God in hell, and

places the severity of future punishment in a fearful light. This sermon, like the last, is a specimen of rhetorical amplification. Some of the topics treated in this discourse are more fully discussed in the next, Ser. XVIII., (from Acts i. 9,) on "The Ascension of Christ." This is the most startling sermon in the series. The preacher speaks (p. 421) of "the miserable philosophy of the ancient Hebrews," deducible "from the books of the Old Testament!" He says, "The fact is, that there is no such place as that imaginary region, which is commonly called heaven," (p. 424,) and (p. 427, putting the words in capitals,) "I repeat it therefore again, THERE IS NO LOCAL HEAVEN." Yet if, according to the doctrine of Ser. XVI., the "future life of the righteous" be "a social state," it would seem to follow that there must be some one place where good men shall be gathered together; which also is asserted (as we humbly think) in some passages of the New Testament and of our Lord's discourses, and implied in many more. There is much difficulty on every side in the explanation of our Lord's ascension. Mr. Belsham follows Dr. Priestley in supposing "that his abode is somewhere or other in this world—though the subtilty of his ethereal substance renders his personal presence in any particular place imperceptible to the gross organs of sense" (pp. 434 and 435). We can accompany the preacher less confidently in this conjecture, than in his remark, postfixed to his avowal of it, (p. 436,) that it is "better humbly to acknowledge ignorance than to talk dogmatically upon subjects which are beyond our comprehension."

Ser. XIX. (from Job. xiv. 10) is entitled "Presumptions from Natural Appearances against the Doctrine of a Future Life." The object of this discourse is to magnify the importance of the gospel, as the revelation of a life to come. We fear, however, that some minds are so constituted as to be more impressed with the presumptions against renewed existence from natural appearances, than with the direct evidence for it from the Christian religion. The "presumptions" stated by the preacher are (we had almost said) too forcible; but there

are other presumptions, and no light ones, of a contrary nature. These Sermons contain many admissions of the importance of natural religion, (see pp. 81, 209, 287,) and many assertions of the "universal, irresistible tendencies of things to a better and happier state" (see pp. 31, 44, 158, 161 and 205). In the sermon before us the preacher guards against being understood to teach that without revelation the doctrine of a future life is wholly unsupported by evidence:

"If there be a future reward for the righteous, and a just judgment reserved for the wicked, the index of nature, if properly attended to, will be found to point towards this interesting and momentous consummation. And this inquiry, if carefully pursued, will beautifully illustrate the wisdom and goodness of God in his moral dispensations to mankind."—P. 460.

The XXth and last of the Sermons is (from Ecclesiastes vii. 10) "A Comparison between the Preceding and the Present Age with respect to the Encouragement given to Theological Inquiry." This comparison is not, we are sorry to say, in favour of our own times.

"The fact is but too evident. Rational Christianity is out of fashion with the learned and the great. Much more so than it was a century ago. And their example has a baneful influence upon the inferior orders of society, and produces in many a fatal indifference to revealed religion. In this respect it cannot be disguised that former days were better than these. And this indifference to religion is the main discouragement to theological inquiry in the present age."—P. 478.

But there are two happy circumstances alleged by the preacher which "contribute to countervail this disadvantage," viz. "the possession of religious liberty, and the increased attention of the middle classes of society to religious subjects."

We have now enabled our readers to form some judgment of these Discourses. They are unequal; but there are none of them which will not be read with pleasure by the Author's friends, and some there are which will be read with general admiration. Our objection to certain parts of them shews that we regard the volume as

an important and valuable publication.

The sense of some places is obscured by the punctuation, (see pp. 64, 76, 111, &c.,) and there is an evident misprint, p. 321.

ART. II.—*A Sermon, preached at the Dedication of the Second Congregational Church, in Northampton, United States of North America, 7th Dec. 1825.* By Henry Ware, Jun., of Boston. Liverpool, reprinted from the American Edition. Teulon and Fox, 67, Whitechapel; and R. Hunter, St. Paul's Churchyard.

THIS is a sensible, well-written discourse, from Ezra v. 3: "Who hath commanded you to build this house?" The preacher begins by a statement of the reasons which led to the erection of the building now about to be set apart for divine worship:

"The cause of pure Christianity and liberal principles required it of you; for these—'every where spoken against,' though believed by you to be 'the wisdom of God, and the power of God'—demand the countenance and favour of their friends, and are to spread through their labours and sacrifices. The cause of consistent Protestantism, and the great principles of the Reformation, required it; for they demand the multiplication of institutions which shall maintain the equal rights of disciples, and frown upon all assumption of spiritual dominion, and reject all interposition of human creeds and forms between the word of God and the consciences of men."

The writer proceeds to give the "purposes of the house of God;" and, in particular, insists "that the Object of Christian worship is but *one*; and this, not in any modified sense, but strictly and absolutely, without reserve, equivocation or mystery." After an exhortation to worship this undivided Being with "all the heart and soul and mind and strength," a picture is presented of the temple of God, "as designed for the *instruction of man*." We may here be excused if we make a longer extract, as an address to those who lay but secondary stress, at least, on the stated at-

tendance of the house of God, as a place set apart for instruction and the public worship of the Creator:

"Under the Christian dispensation the house of God is, in the strictest sense, a place of moral instruction, a school of religious knowledge. There, while the mind is affected with a sense of the Divine presence, and the heart warmed and softened by devotion, the seeds of instruction find ready admission and take easy root. The most favourable opportunity exists of imparting high doctrine, of inculcating correct principles, of fixing the love, admiration, and desire of excellence, and of enforcing the most commanding motives. The influence which the house of God may thus exert—established as it is in all the little communities throughout a Christian land—is immense. And there is something worthy of the Divinity in the simplicity with which this mighty engine operates. This provision of houses for the worship and instruction of all the people, is peculiar to Christianity. The most efficacious mean of moral improvement, order and happiness ever devised, which gives a power and security independent of human law, teaching every man to be a law to himself—has yet been unknown except to the Christian Church. It has caused a connexion between the services of religion and the duties of life which never elsewhere existed, not even in the ancient dispensation, to an extent by any means equal, and among the other nations of the world not in any degree. For, with them, religion was little better than a substitute and excuse for morals; while their moral teachers dealt out formal wisdom and maxims of philosophy, independent of the sanctions of religious truth. The Christian Church unites them all, and thus erects a combination in favour of religion and morality, strengthening the influence of each by the authority of the other, before which the errors and superstitions, the sins and the wretchedness of each, must finally be overthrown.

"Observe this a little more minutely, and trace its operation. In the house of God, on every seventh day, those who associate in the ordinary walks of life—families, friends and neighbours—are assembled together to unite in religious offerings, to hear the reading of the records of Revelation, to listen to the discussion of the most interesting and important topics, and to receive serious and friendly exhortations concerning principle and duty. Can the influence of this be otherwise than immense? How much is

thus done for the prevalent tone of public morals and manners, and for the general healthiness of public opinion! How vast an influence is exerted for the sobriety and integrity even of those who personally feel little interest in the truths of religion! The instructions of God's house spread a light through the community, which exposes all objects in a clearer and juster character, even to the eyes of those who care nothing for the source of that light. Unprofitably as many preach, thoughtlessly as many hear, it is yet impossible to prevent this indirect influence of Christian institutions. If all who preside over them were powerful and faithful, and all who attend them conscientious and teachable, there could hardly be an assignable limit to their efficacy. What does the past experience of the world teach us? Whence have truth and virtue hitherto derived their influence, and what has been the main instrument of establishing knowledge, civilization and happiness among men? Ask the legislators of mankind. They did, in the ancient empires of the world, all which could be done; and yet, in their most favoured days, barbarism and dissoluteness maintained a hardly interrupted

away. Ask the philosophers of mankind. They were among the most gifted of their race, and what men could do, they did. Yet how small their impression on the condition of the world! How powerless their exhortations, how inefficient their maxims, and how soon the surrounding darkness of society closed over and extinguished the lustre which shone about them! No; it is not human law nor human wisdom: it is the power of God's truth proclaimed from God's temple. This it is which has reached the mass of men, and changed the face of the world; which has pervaded even the obscure places of the community, and found its way to the very heart. And, therefore, man has risen, and knowledge has spread, and virtue has been honoured, and happiness has advanced; and they must still advance, from step to step, from glory to glory. Every temple that is built, every assembly that is collected, every herald of the gospel that is stationed on his watch-tower, does something to urge forward the perfection of the human race, and the spiritual emancipation of the world."

T.

POETRY.

HYMN.

"Say, Our Father who art in heaven."—JESUS CHRIST.

"Every man born into this world is liable to all the pains of this life and the miseries of hell for ever."—WESTMINSTER DIVINES.

COULD that dread Power, supremely wise and just,
 Who formed this curious frame of breathing dust
 A fit abode for that ethereal fire
 Which tends to him, the universal Sire,
 The countless myriads of our kind create
 To dwell with misery in this changeful state;
 And, when this short and feverish strife is o'er,
 To sink o'erwhelm'd with woe, to rise no more,
 No justice measur'd and no guilt defined,
 In torturing flames eternally confin'd?
 Tyrannic vengeance sway'd the Eternal breast,
 If such to man, frail man, his high behest.
 Reason, the thought rejects; her voice divine
 Bids her desponding sons that thought resign.
 She says, if God be good, for good ordain'd
 Are all his works; by man must be attain'd
 The end for which he lives, to which he aims,
 And God shall give the joy his creature claims.
 Pass but the term the crime itself requires,
 The flame of purifying power expires;

The penal fire at length shall cease to burn,
The lost to truth and duty shall return,
Hail Heaven's bright visions bursting on their sight,
And rapturous join the first-born sons of light,
Whilst the high host with undivided soul,
Adoring own that Love which wrought the whole.

N. J.

LINES ON THE CORPSE OF AN INFANT,—S. F., AGED TWO YEARS.

HEAVE not a sigh to break the rest
So calm and deep, and let no tear
Fall on the pure and spotless vest
Of innocence on its early bier.

Raise not a wish to call her back
To the dark and stormy scenes of time,
Where sin had tainted soon the track
Through which she passed to a happier clime.

Bless'd, indeed, was her human story;
An angel mind in a mortal frame;
No ill could tarnish its native glory
Ere called to God from whom it came.

The spirit immortal, which here in vain,
Perchance, with sorrow and sin had striven,
Is blest beyond the reach of pain
In the bosom of God,—the Father in Heav'n.

Then shed no tear, and heave no sigh,
For the babe that rests on its quiet bed;
But fix thy sorrowing thoughts on high,
And prepare to join the happy dead.

N. J.

THE FABLE OF PROSERPINE.

PROSERPINE, in the prime of May,
Awoke with earliest smile of dawn,
Unveil'd her beauty to the day,
Lively yet timid as a fawn.
Nymphs, sporting round their lady, strew,
In blooming Enna's fragrant vale,
New flow'rets, fresh with heavenly dew:
No sound of death disturbs the gale.
Ill-favour'd Pluto's hand unseen
Seiz'd her, by stealth, to be his queen! *

W. E.

* Elysii sponsa tyranni.

OBITUARY.

CHARLES SYMMONS, D. D.

(From the *Gent. Mag.*)

1826: April 27, at *Bath*, the Rev. C. SYMMONS, D. D., Rector of Narberth and Llampeter Velfry, and Prebendary of Clyday, Pembrokeshire.

This gentleman was the younger son of John Symmons, M. P. for the town of Cardigan, which he represented in three successive Parliaments from 1746 to 1761; and was born in the year 1749. He was educated at Westminster under Dr. Smith, and distinguished himself much by his early attachment to poetry, being remarkable for the length and (for a boy) the excellence of what are there called Bible exercises, shutting himself up all Sunday to produce a long copy of verses on the Monday morning. From Westminster he was sent to the University of Glasgow, where he contracted a great friendship with the celebrated Mr. Windham, who was much attached to him, and to whose friendship he owed the living of Llampeter at a subsequent period, when Mr. W. was colleague in Administration with Mr. Pitt in the war of the French Revolution, and who would doubtless have done more for him in the Church, had not the public avowal of his political sentiments at Cambridge, when parties ran high, thrown difficulties in the way of that minister's friendly intentions.

But this is to anticipate. From Glasgow he entered at Clare Hall, Cambridge, where he took the degree of B. D., in 1776, and was presented to the Rectory of Narberth, by the King, in 1778. His first publication was in 1778, an octavo volume of Sermons [which came to a 2nd edit.]. In 1789, he published in quarto, "A Sermon for the Benefit of decayed Clergymen in the Diocese of St. David's;" and in 1790, "The Consequence of the Character of the Individual, and the Influence of Education in forming it," a Sermon, preached in the parish church of St. Peter's, Carmarthen, on Sunday, Oct. 10, 1790, for the benefit of a Sunday-school, and published at the request of the managers of the charity.

Early in the year 1794, when he was about to be presented to the Rectory of Llampeter by the interest of his friend Mr. Windham, he imprudently, and certainly unnecessarily, in a sermon before the University of Cambridge, broached some Whig sentiments, which at the present day might have been preached with utter impunity before all the Mi-

nisters, being sentiments purely theoretic and of the old Whig school: but at that time, parties running high, a handle was made of the circumstance by some designing persons, one of whom, in particular, having begged for a perusal under the solemn promise of making no improper use of it, was strongly suspected of having sent up garbled extracts to the Lord Chancellor and others in Administration. Such extracts certainly were in their hands, and they occasioned Mr. W. considerable difficulty in having the presentation made out, which, however, at last his friendly perseverance accomplished, accompanied with this observation, "I could have obtained for another a Deanery with less difficulty than I have had to get this Welch living for you." Finding from the same cause obstacles thrown in his way in obtaining a further degree, he removed to Oxford, where, on the 24th of March, 1794, he was incorporated B. D. of Jesus College, and on the 26th, proceeded D. D.

In 1797, he produced "*Inez*," a dramatic poem; and in 1800, another, called "*Constantia*." In 1806, appeared his "*Life of Milton*," prefixed to an edition of Milton's Prose Works, of which he was not the editor. The *Life of Milton*, his favourite author, was written *con amore*, and though the political sentiments may be displeasing to some, yet it is generally allowed to be a very interesting piece of biography, and must be recommended to all by the display of character, the sincerity of profession, and the glow of sentiment discoverable throughout—

unde fit ut omnis
Votiva pateat quasi descripta tabella
Vita viri.

In 1813, he issued an octavo volume of Poems, partly his own, but partly those of a departed daughter, Caroline Symmons, a young lady of admirable talents, as her little poems shew, written in all the playfulness of childhood, and poured out almost *extempore* when walking out, or playing, and some at a time when she could hardly write them herself,—so much in her had Nature outrun Art and Education. Subsequently he amused his leisure hours with writing a "*Rhymed Translation of the Æneis*," which was published in 1817; and only a few months before his death he composed a biographical sketch of Shakspeare's Life, of which he made a present to Mr. Whittingham, his neighbour at Chiswick,

[where he had a villa,] and it has been recently prefixed by that well-known printer to a 12mo edition of Shakspeare's Works.

Born of an old family of provincial gentry, which may be traced back for four centuries, according to Mr. Fenton, the historiographer of that county, and in the hospitable house of an English gentleman of the old school, at a time when "classes were more unmixed, and before a spirit of commerce had blended all ranks in the spirit of adventure and enterprize," some of the leading traits of his character may be traced to that circumstance. Though never, perhaps, has a greater change taken place in any country than in this in the last thirty or forty years, yet he retained the stamp and character of the age when he was born, and appeared more to belong to the earlier times of the last century, than to the present. Charitable, humane, open-hearted, unsuspicious, and confiding, he preserved to an advanced age the raciness of a youthful character; his defect was, that he was to a fault inapt for business, and neglectful of his worldly interests; indeed the whole frame of his character was unfitted for the common competition of life. He was a votary of pleasure in the insidious shape of literary leisure, which Euripides feelingly calls *σχολη τερπνον κακον*. Naturally timid and retiring, he never was very fond of general society; but his conversation was, with those who knew him, eminently agreeable and instructive, being a remarkably well-informed man, and well read in history, theology, and all the best writers and divines. As a Clergyman of the Church of England, he was sincerely attached to its doctrine, and practised its religion without any tincture of moroseness or ostentation. Being naturally of a delicate and sensitive fibre, humanity and charitableness formed leading features of his character; he never could hear of distress or witness cruelty without having his pity excited, or indignation roused: his love of doing good was of such a nature, that, though inactive in his own affairs, he was always active in those of others, sedulous in applying for relief for the distressed, at the Literary Fund,* and, in many instances, in other quarters, obtaining situations for

individuals which have made their provisions for life.

He was so unworldly, that at a superficial glance he was likely to be, and probably was, misunderstood by the world, but not so by his family, his friends, and his neighbours; they saw the nobleness, simplicity and innocence of his character. Being of an ardent disposition, he felt strongly, and expressed himself frequently in terms that by no means corresponded with the real gentleness of his nature. Allusion is here made to some expressions of asperity used by him in his *Life of Milton*. But in truth all such feeling was so foreign to his heart, that he really was unconscious of the force of his expressions, and did not consider how much they would weigh with those who too often cloak real malignity in the guise of urbanity; and the error resolves itself into a fault of style, which had nothing to do with the heart. The same defence might be made for Dr. Symmons that Luther made for himself (as cited by Milton in his *Apology for Smectymnus*), "That he was of an ardent disposition, and could not write a *dull* style." To illustrate the truth of this: the late Mr. Boswell, who had more reason than any other to complain of him, the idol of whose father, Dr. Johnson, and whose personal friend, Mr. Malone, he had treated, to say the least, very unceremoniously in his writings, always regarded him with the greatest respect and affection.

His politics (for every Englishman of the old school had his politics) were really of the most harmless and inoffensive description, more belonging to the period of his earlier days, than to the times we live in, more theoretical than practical, and exactly such as he professes them, of the school of Locke and of Somers. But whatever they were, he always steadily maintained them, and sincerely avowed them, without any reference to his own interests. But he never was, nor never could have been, an active politician in the real sense of the word; that is, a man trading in opinions, and struggling for advancement; his proper sphere was in retirement and the bosom of his family, where he was a kind and affectionate husband and father, and a most indulgent master.

In his habits, he was remarkable for the regularity of his hours, his movements being always guided by a favourite chronometer, and he invariably rose at five o'clock in the morning, winter and summer. He had enjoyed from his temperate habits (being a Rechabite with regard to wine), a long course of health, and maintained a hale and florid look

* Dr. Symmons was one of the Registrars, and a zealous supporter of that admirable Institution, the Literary Fund, promoted its interests by many efficient services, and occasionally favoured it with poetical contributions for recital at the Anniversary.—*EDIT. Gent. Mag.*

to a late period of life. He never had the appearance, nor gave himself the indulgencies of an old man; but with him, old age, disease and death, came on in the short space of two months. This blessing of God, a long and uninterrupted course of good health, operated fatally towards his end, as he hardly could be prevailed on to take medicine, and no entreaties could induce him to change his early habits of rising at five in the morning, so incompatible with his declining strength and medical treatment, till within one fortnight previous to his end; when it required all the authority and address of his medical attendants to make him take to that bed from which he never more was doomed to rise.

To sum up. He was a man of nature more than of art—a man of almost romantic integrity, of almost culpable disinterestedness, and of impracticable sincerity; he had faults, but in those faults, to use the words of a great orator, “there was no mixture of pride, of hypocrisy, of deceit, of complexional despotism, or want of feeling for the distresses of mankind.” The Romans would have inscribed on his tomb the really exalted though apparently humble epithet of “*Innocens*.”

In the year 1779, he married Elizabeth, daughter of J. Foley, Esq., of Ridgway, co. Pembroke, and sister of Admiral Sir Thomas Foley, G. C. B., by whom he had issue John Symmons;* Fannia, married to Lieut. Col. Mallet, of the 89th Regiment; Charles; Caroline; and Maria. The two eldest, and his widow, only survive to lament his loss.

[We have taken the above from the Magazine referred to without any other alteration than the few words in two places within [], though some of the expressions are not exactly to our taste.—A writer in the *Monthly Magazine* [July, p. 104] says, that Dr. Symmons enjoyed the friendship of the late and present Marquesses of Lansdowne, of Mr. Fox and of Dr. Parr. He states also that “he was an occasional contributor to the *Monthly Review*, and at one period was connected with the British Press newspaper.” He adds, but surely the printer has taken a negative word out of the sentence—“We think it” [qu. not?] “credible to his literary judgment, that he was a staunch believer in the authenticity of Rowley’s Poems.”]

* An accomplished Greek scholar, and well known to the literary world as the translator of the *Agamemnon* of *Æschylus*, a work which has been much admired for its fidelity and poetical merit. *Edit. Gent. Mag.*

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June 2, at *Headcorn*, in the *Wield* of *Kent*, in the 88th year of his age, Mr. STEPHEN LOVE, much beloved and highly respected. He was the son of Edward and Elizabeth Love, and from his youth belonged to the General Baptist Church of that town. The greater part of his life was spent in farming, in which he shewed not only industry and prudence, but manifested the strictest integrity. His company was courted by the society in which he was accustomed to move, for he was an intelligent and pleasant companion. The surviving members of his family can bear testimony to the amiable, discreet and pious conduct which their departed relative exercised towards them, for he passed his life in the fear of God, which he deeply impressed upon the tender minds of his offspring. The poor in the neighbourhood, whom he was accustomed to animate with his good company, have in him lost a friend, who practised among them his benevolent deeds. His religious principles from early youth were Unitarian, but he was a firm advocate of the neglected and despised rite of Christian baptism. Although steady to his principles, yet he was no bigot, considering it a crime to deny his fellow-creatures privileges which he claimed in common with them, and was, consequently, friendly with men of all parties. Through life he continued a consistent member of the church of Christ, attending its services regularly, imbibing Christian principles, and pursuing a righteous conduct. Though it was his lot to have a large share of trouble, he possessed his mind in peace, confiding in the good providence of an impartial Governor, whose “thoughts are not as our thoughts, nor are his ways as our ways.” The church of which he was the most active member and chief support, has experienced an irreparable loss, whilst his infirm and mournful relict, together with the surviving family, lament the deprivation of a kind husband and an affectionate parent. In a word, he was a good man and a pious Christian, without boast or ostentation. After a few weeks’ confinement, suffering from a dropsy, he fell into the arms of death, under the humble assurance of rising to mingle along with the glorious company of the just in a better world! He was interred in the burial-ground belonging to the General Baptist Meeting-house at Headcorn. Mr. Payne, of Rolvenden, who was appointed by the deceased, officiated on the melancholy occasion, and afterwards delivered an appropriate discourse from *Psa. xxxix. 12, 13*.

J. EVANS.

Islington, July 16, 1826.

June 25, at *Bolton*, aged 60, the Rev. JOHN HOLLAND, thirty-five years minister of Bank-Street Chapel, having succeeded his uncle, Philip Holland, in 1789. Naturally of a warm and ardent mind, he set himself with great alacrity to promote schemes for the religious instruction of the young; and for this purpose not only encouraged Sunday-schools, but formed classes of young people connected with his congregation, for whose use he drew up a short Catechism, on a plan somewhat new, the questions being first printed by themselves, and then the answers; that the children might be encouraged to give their own answers as often as they could, and only to refer to the printed answers when at a loss. On the same principle he also printed a large collection of Historical and Practical Questions on the Old and New Testament, with references to the texts for answers: but before that time he had joined with his brother, Mr. Thomas Holland, of Manchester, in compiling a pretty little volume, entitled Exercises for the Memory and Understanding, with a copious Appendix of Questions, without Answers, on Mrs. Barbauld's Lessons and Hymns, on the Calendar of Nature, and the Evenings at Home, the first specimens, it is believed, of the Interrogative System, and certainly before any books were printed by one who has since so confidently claimed it. About the same time three sermons were printed at Newcastle, under the title of Thoughts on Truth, on Prejudice, and on Sincerity. His subsequent publications were, enlarged editions of the Exercises, &c.; Definitions and Principles, intended to introduce something more of knowledge and practice into the copies prepared for writing-schools; a System of Ancient (including Scriptural) and Modern Geography, Essays on Ancient History, with Questions for Examination; and it is believed, that a series of Essays on Modern History, on the same plan, were

some time ago prepared for the press. During the last two or three years his faculties have appeared to lie under a cloud; which, however, a short time before his death gave signs of dispersing, and he died in a comfortable and happy state of mind, to the great satisfaction of his friends.

July 1, at *Newcastle*, aged 27, Mr. ROBERT RICHARD RANKIN, solicitor, and one of the coroners of that town and county; a young man of extraordinary talents and acquirements, and of such well-established religious principles and moral habits as promised to render him a bright ornament to society in the next generation. It has pleased Providence to order otherwise, and it is the duty of his friends to submit. Having been appointed one of the Deputy Sheriffs for taking the poll in the late severe contest for Northumberland, the anxiety of his mind to conduct himself with propriety, the agitation of the whole scene, so contrary to his views and habits, and the intense heat of the weather, aggravated some probable previous indisposition into a severe nervous fever, which carried him off, to the great regret and sorrow of a numerous circle of friends.

Lately, at *Mareham-le-Fen*, near Horn-castle, Lincolnshire, after a severe and lingering illness, Mr. JAMES ROBERTS, aged 74 years. In 1768 and the three following years, this gentleman accompanied Sir Joseph Banks in the first voyage of Captain Cook round the world, and in 1772, he again accompanied Sir Joseph in his voyage to Iceland. In 1795, he retired to Mareham House, where he spent the remainder of his days in the society of his friends. Mr. Roberts was, we believe, the last survivor of those who accompanied Captain Cook in his first voyage.

INTELLIGENCE.

DOMESTIC.

RELIGIOUS.

Manchester College, York.

ON Sunday morning, June 25, the business of the Examination-week in this College commenced with a Sermon on Titus ii. 15, by the Rev. William Shepherd, which it is understood that the able preacher has consented shall be printed at the expense of the Trustees. On Monday afternoon, the three Hebrew

Classes passed through a long and careful *viva voce* examination. On Tuesday, the three Mathematical Classes were examined *in writing* during three hours, after which Orations were delivered by Mr. Marsland on the question, "Whether Commerce and Manufactures are unfavourable to Virtue?" and by Mr. Philipps on Phrenology. The Junior Greek and the Logic Classes were then examined, and Orations were delivered by Mr. Davis, on Capital Punishments; and by Mr. Paget, on the Origin of the

English Drama. The business of Wednesday began with a very interesting and satisfactory examination on the Evidences; after which, Oration were read by Mr. Squire, on the History and Character of Charles I.; by Mr. Higginson, to shew that the Propagation of Christianity cannot be accounted for on any other supposition than that of its Divine Origin; and by Mr. Talbot, on the Nature and Design of Sacrifices under the Mosaic Dispensation. The Class of Ancient History were then examined *vivâ voce*, and the Junior and Senior Latin Classes in writing. Then followed Oration, by Mr. Rankin, on the Conduct of Cicero; by Mr. Freeman, to shew that what is Morally Wrong can never be Politically Right; and by Mr. Ketley, that the Want of Universality is no valid Objection to the Truth of Christianity: and the business of this day concluded with highly creditable specimens of improvement in Elocution, by Messrs. Davis, Howorth, Paget, Higginson, Gaskell and Aspland. On Thursday, the Fourth and Fifth Years' Students were examined in Theology, and at the same time the Belles Lettres Class, all *in writing*; these were followed by an Oration on the Political Writings and Public Character of Milton, by Mr. Gaskell; and a Sermon on Rom. viii. 35, by Mr. Lee. The Class of Ethics and Political Economy, and the Senior Greek Class were then examined, both *vivâ voce*, after which followed Sermons, on Luke x. 5, 6, by Mr. Aspland, and on 1 Thess. v. 21, by Mr. Howorth: and the Examination was closed by an Address from the Visitor, the following Extracts from which are sent for insertion in the Monthly Repository.

"GENTLEMEN,

"I am happy to be once more permitted to be the instrument of conveying to you our sentiments of general satisfaction in the result of this long and fatiguing examination. When I consider the vicissitudes of the present state, and the instances of mortality which are daily occurring around, more especially those* which have contributed so much to diminish your number as well as ours on the present occasion, I feel that I ought not to reflect upon the pleasure of so many uninterrupted visits to this place, without expressing at the same time my thanks to Him 'in whose hand our life and breath are, and with whom is the measure of our days.'

"You must be very sensible that it is not the intention of these Annual Examinations to deceive you or the public

by the offer of an indiscriminate praise, but carefully to ascertain, and without disguise to report to you, our ideas respecting the progress which you have made. Never but once, and that many years ago, was I under the disagreeable necessity of finding any serious fault, and I am not going to do so now, when I express, I believe, the general impression, that this examination, particularly as to some of the *vivâ voce* parts of it, has not quite come up to what may be called the *par* standard. We are aware, however, of the many interruptions, both of a public and private nature, which have necessarily contributed to this, and we all feel the relaxing effects which the present intense heats must have produced upon the examined as well as the examiners. But as it is far more agreeable to me to commend than censure, I am happy to be the organ of conveying to you, Gentlemen, the concurrent testimony of this Assembly, that in the composition, and more especially in the delivery, of your Oration and Sermons, there has been a very marked improvement. I have no doubt that you will find the great advantage of this in promoting the acceptableness of such of you as are designed for the ministry, and in the satisfaction with which our young Lay-friends will acquit themselves, when called either to read to a family circle, or to address more numerous assemblies.

"I now proceed to the pleasing task of distributing the testimonies of their good opinion, with which I have been directed by the Committee, or made the instrument of individual friends, to distinguish those who have been thought most eminent in their several classes, or in general regularity, diligence and proficiency. The two prizes offered by a Friend to the Institution, to the Mathematical Students in the Junior and Second Classes, have been adjudged respectively to Mr. — Johnson and Mr. Henry Squire; the two prizes offered by Robert Philips, Esq., to the best Classical Scholars, in the first and second years, to Mr. Charles Fletcher and Mr. Thomas Davis. The prize offered by Euelpis for the *best Greek Translation*, to Mr. William Gaskell; and that by Mr. Bell, for the best Latin Essay on the subject, 'Opifex dicendi Stylus,' to Mr. S. C. Freeman. The two prizes offered to Students in the first year, by Mr. Wood, for the best specimens of English Composition produced in the Weekly Exercises of the Class, and by Dr. Carpenter, for the greatest proficiency in Composition during the Session, have been adjudged by the Students themselves, Mr. Wood's to Mr. H. Wreford, Dr. Carpen-

* See Obituaries for the last and present month.

ter's to Mr. Charles Davidson. The prizes for the best Oration, and also the best delivered Oration, at this Examination, to Mr. Higginson, to whom also is adjudged the first prize for Regularity, Diligence and Proficiency throughout the Session, as are the second and third to Mr. Henry Squire, and Mr. Henry Wrexford. If Mr. Darbshire had not been obliged by ill health to leave the College before the conclusion of the Session, he would undoubtedly have maintained his already acquired rank: the circumstance also of Mr. Bache's not having been a Student during the whole Session, alone prevented his obtaining one of these prizes; it should also be mentioned that he has with great delicacy and propriety declined being a competitor with his fellow-students of the first class, on account of his superior age and previous attainments.

"And now let me address a few thoughts to my young friends who are going to leave us for important stations in the Church of Christ, and in general to the Students for the ministry. You will find it, Gentlemen, of great advantage to have some first principle, by carefully attending to which you may judge of the general course you ought to pursue, the best manner of doing particular things, and the issue which you may reasonably expect from the whole. I find the excellent Mr. Grove, who so long and so successfully directed the education of Students for the ministry during the early part of the last century, has proposed a very short but comprehensive one, which the Apostle Paul had given to his pupil Timothy, 'Study to shew thyself approved unto God.' In every debate with thyself, which thou shalt choose among several contradictory ways, in every difficulty respecting the conduct which others may expect thee to pursue, be this thy constant aim, 'What will secure me the Divine approbation?'

"Not that it is unlawful or improper to desire and endeavour being approved by men as well as by God, or impossible to a certain degree to obtain it; nay, it is mentioned to the honour of our Master, that in his early years he increased in wisdom, and in favour both with God and man; and the Apostle has told us that righteousness and peace and joy in a holy spirit will render us acceptable to God and approved of men. But if any love the praise of men more than the praise of God, if, when these come into competition, the competition can be admitted for a moment to influence their decision, they will soon cease to prove themselves 'workmen that need not be ashamed, uprightly distributing the word

of truth;' they will not scruple to adulterate it, so as that it may please men.

"The man who studies to shew himself approved unto God, having first endeavoured to establish himself in right and worthy notions of that Sovereign Being whose approbation he seeks, will make it his great care to know his will, and what he expects from him in his private and public character as a Christian and a Christian minister. Especially he will draw from the Christian Scriptures the scheme of his doctrine and the model of his life, and will thence trace out his duty as an instructor and an example, ever following that which appears to *be* his duty, whatever contradiction, reproach, or inconvenience he may be called to suffer by it. Though far from setting up his private sense as superior to the rest of mankind, and ready to mistrust his own judgment when he finds it differ from others; on the contrary, thankful for all the assistance he can receive from others, and never through vain conceit ashamed to confess his obligations to any, when he *has* satisfied his mind that he has found the truth, whether in speculation or practice, he feels himself bound to declare it with an honest freedom, and to detect and expose prevailing errors and vices, as he hopes to be approved by Him, to whom he is indebted for all his faculties and all his opportunities of improvement. At the same time he will do this with all the deference and respect for others which he feels is becoming in one who is conscious how much pains he has himself found requisite to one who wishes to form a right judgment, and from how many different points of view men necessarily see and judge of the same object: he will not, therefore, think the worse of another merely for differing from him, but while he feels a necessity laid upon him to preach the gospel in what he conceives its most favourable and efficacious form, he will strive to do it, not in the spirit of a party-man, but of a sincere inquirer after Christian truth.

"For your encouragement in habituating yourselves to act by this simple rule, consider that whoever sincerely studies to shew himself approved unto God is *sure* to *be* approved by him. He who faithfully improves the ability and opportunities afforded him, and with them seeks not his own will or his own glory, but the glory of his Father in heaven, is a successful imitator of his blessed Master, and with him will share the glory prepared before the world was.

"Consider, further, that having approved yourselves to God, you cannot fail to be self-approved: you cannot but

have rejoicing in yourselves, a joy which no man can take from you. But, indeed, it will commonly be the case, that you will also secure the approbation of your fellow-men, at least of all whose good opinion is at all valuable. Nay, with regard to others, he who shews himself a pattern of good works, in doctrine uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech which cannot be condemned, will generally make him that is of the contrary part ashamed, having no evil thing to say of him.

“But the man who is approved of God will learn (I will not say to despise, for I would not have such a feeling come into the breast of a Christian minister, but he will be disposed) to make allowances for, to pity, and to preserve his own tranquillity under the perverse spirits and tempers of men. For it must not be concealed from you, my young friends, you ought not to conceal it from yourselves, that you will be sure to meet with many of these things; many little circumstances, in the most favourable situations, which, if you be disposed to be irritated and vexed, will not fail to irritate and vex you. You should never forget that, while you are in the world, you must take the world as you find it; endeavour, indeed, to make it as much better as you can; but still you must expect to meet with obstacles to your success, drawbacks upon your happiness. Churches are little worlds; or like the sea in the parable, into which if, as fishers of men, we cast our Master’s net, we must expect to take of every kind, and we shall not always, or generally, be able to gather the good only into our vessels, and cast the bad away. To drop the metaphor, you must expect to meet in the course of your ministerial engagements with frequent sources of disappointment and mortification; but at the same time I persuade myself, if you enter upon your office with right views of its nature and objects, and to whom you should study to shew yourselves approved, you will meet with much more abundant opportunities of usefulness and success, and consequently of happiness. You may, however, meet with many trials,* with injudicious flatterers, who by indiscriminate praise may, as Mr. Wakefield says, ‘puff you

up with the wind of self-sufficiency,’ and render you only more conspicuous objects for the darts of such as may be disposed to disparage and bring you into contempt; you may meet with a Diotrophes, who loveth the pre-eminence; with a false disciple, who will raise up factions in the church; with a Hymenæus and Philetus, sceptical explainers-away. All these St. Paul encountered, and you may not hope to be entirely free from them. Think not by changing from place to place to get rid of all annoyances; I repeat it, in the most favourable situations, though you should be exempt from those already mentioned, you will have the sorrow to see grievous misconducts in those from whom you had hoped for better things; young persons with whom you had taken the most pains disappointing your favourable expectations; many of their elders, on whose co-operation you had counted, declining to encourage your schemes of usefulness; others, perhaps from some imaginary pique, some prospect of worldly advancement, or some whim for which you have no means of accounting, deserting your ministry, and even dropping your acquaintance. Now, if you have only the common worldly motives of temporal emolument, empty distinction for popular talents, general estimation, or even ministerial success, I pledge myself that, in any place, you will find yourselves grievously disappointed. But if through your whole conduct you lay down this for your principle, to ‘study to approve yourselves unto God,’ the consciousness of this object having been steadily pursued and, consequently, *secured*, will support you under all disappointments; and, at the same time, will be the most likely means of securing you from them. For this will be found most effectual to your attaining the further object, on which my friend Mr. Shepherd has, I understand, so eloquently enlarged, to ‘let no man despise you.’ And if you thus support the credit and dignity of your profession, it will appear to the world that your religion is calculated to promote the freedom of the mind, to enlarge the heart, to sweeten the passions, and to unite mankind in the bonds of love, and prepare them for the heavenly world. In that world you will have praise of God for your diligence, fidelity and sincere endeavours to know, to practise, and to teach his will, whether you may here have praise of men or not. Let it then be ‘a small matter with you to be judged by men or of man’s judgment: he that judgeth all things is the Lord.’

“Wait, therefore, on the Lord; be of good courage, and he shall strengthen

* Many of these trials are well represented in Mr. Binney’s Memoir of Mr. Stephen Morell, which, with due allowances, may be read with profit by young ministers of any denomination. Only let it not (it was not I am sure intended) excite a spirit of suspicious jealousy, but only check too sanguine expectations.

your hearts. Stir up the gift of God that is in you. Cherish in yourselves the noble principle of love to God, to the Lord Jesus, and to the best interests of men. Esteem it the greatest happiness of your lives, and the most acceptable way of serving God, to be diligent in serving your generation according to the will of God. Be kind to the unkind, have charity for the uncharitable, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient towards all men, and by manifestation of the truth, let it be your aim to commend yourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God."

The company then separated, after a short devotional exercise, as much satisfied with the result of the week's examination, as the great heat of the weather would allow.

Lancashire and Cheshire Provincial Meeting.

THE Annual Provincial Meeting of the Presbyterian and Unitarian Ministers of Lancashire and Cheshire was held on the 22d of June last, at the Unitarian Chapel, Mosley Street, Manchester. The service in the chapel was introduced by the Rev. J. Ashton, of Knutsford, as substitute for the Rev. C. Wallace, of Altringham; and a sermon was preached by the Rev. W. Tate, of Chorley, from Matt. xxiii. 8; in which, with great candour and earnestness, he stated the grounds, and urged the duty, of dissent from the doctrines and discipline of the Church of England. A meeting for business was afterwards held, when thanks were voted to Messrs. Ashton and Tate for their services on the occasion; and the Rev. J. Whitehead, of Cockey-Moor, was appointed supporter to Mr. Wallace, the preacher at the next annual meeting. Certain propositions having been drawn up by some of the ministers of Manchester and its vicinity, and submitted previously to the consideration of their brethren in the two counties that they might come prepared to express their opinions upon them at the present meeting, it was agreed that this meeting be now adjourned, and that its further proceedings be resumed immediately after dinner at the inn. Upwards of thirty ministers, and a considerable number of lay-gentlemen, assembled and dined at the Spread Eagle, Hanging Ditch; and almost as soon as the cloth was drawn, business was recommenced: the Rev. W. Tate in the Chair. In the course of the afternoon the following resolutions were passed:

Resolved, on the motion of the Rev. W. Hincks, of Liverpool, seconded by the Rev. W. Broadbent, of Warrington, That, with a view to excite additional

interest in the proceedings of the Provincial Meeting of the Presbyterian and Unitarian Ministers in Lancashire and Cheshire, and to promote increased unity and co-operation among its members—it be henceforward conducted according to regulations to be agreed on at the present meeting.

Resolved, 1st, That, at the future Anniversaries of this Meeting, the Committees of the Manchester and Liverpool Book and Tract Societies be requested to furnish a brief report of the proceedings, and an abstract of the accounts, of the two Societies for the preceding year; for the purpose of making the operations of the Societies better known and more extensively useful to the Unitarian body, throughout the two counties of Lancashire and Cheshire.

Resolved, 2d, That, henceforward, the Committee of the Missionary Society be requested to furnish this Meeting with a statement of the proceedings of that Society during the past year, for the purpose of enabling this Meeting to take into its consideration the best means of improving the funds of the Missionary Society, and of giving increased usefulness and extent to its operations.

Resolved, 3d, That this Meeting will be glad to receive from its members, especially from ministers in the remoter parts of the two counties, a statement of the progress of the Unitarian interest in their several neighbourhoods, and of the number of children educated in the schools connected with their respective congregations, and, in particular, of the way and the degree in which the operations either of the Tract Societies or the Missionary Society could be made to serve the cause of piety and virtue, and to co-operate with the labours of the settled ministers in their several districts.

Resolved, 4th, That this Meeting, still retaining the name of the Provincial Meeting of the Presbyterian and Unitarian Ministers of Lancashire and Cheshire, will connect itself as a District Association with the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, and transmit to the same, annually, a brief statement of its proceedings, and of the most important facts contained in the several reports laid before it.

Resolved, 5th, That all ministers settled in either of the two counties, and every layman entitled to a vote at the Meetings of any one of the Unitarian Institutions already established in the two counties, viz. either the Widows' Fund or the Manchester or Liverpool Book and Tract Society, or the Missionary Society, be considered a member of the Provincial Meeting, and entitled to a vote in its proceedings.

Resolved, 6th, That it is desirable that a Fund be created by annual subscriptions and donations of friends to the Association for the purpose of defraying its occasional expenses, and of connecting it with the central Association.

Resolved, 7th, That a Committee, consisting of the following gentlemen, be appointed to carry into effect the resolutions now passed, with power to add to their numbers, any five of whom shall be competent to act; Revds. J. G. Robberds, J. J. Tayler, W. Johns, R. Smethurst, J. R. Beard, T. C. Holland, J. H. Worthington, Messrs. G. W. Wood, S. D. Darbishire, — Ashton, Edward Shawcross, P. Eckersley.

Resolved, 8th, That a Secretary be appointed to this Association, whose office it shall be to conduct the correspondence of the Association, and enter in a book, appointed for the purpose, a record of its annual proceedings; and to transmit the same to the Secretary of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association.

Resolved, 9th, That the Rev. B. R. Davis, of Chowbent, having resigned his situation as Secretary to the Provincial Meeting, is entitled to our warmest thanks for his past services on its behalf.

Resolved, 10th, That the Rev. J. H. Worthington be appointed Secretary to this Association.

Resolved, 11th, That G. W. Wood, Esq. be requested to undertake the office of Treasurer to this Association.

At a meeting of the Committee, held on the following day, it was resolved, That R. Potter, Esq., Deputy Treasurer of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association be requested to act upon this Committee. It was further determined that the above Resolutions be transmitted, for publication, to the Editor of the Monthly Repository and Christian Reformer.

J. H. W., Secretary.

Kent and Sussex Unitarian Christian Association.

Maidstone, July 20, 1826.

THE Fourteenth Anniversary of this Association was holden here on Wednesday, June 28th. The Rev. L. Holden conducted, with great earnestness and solemnity, the introductory services of reading the Scripture and prayer; after which, the Rev. J. Gilchrist delivered a discourse from Gal. iv. 18, containing an abundance of useful reflection on the nature of Christian zeal and the necessity of directing it to a good object. Bible and Missionary Societies, Schools for the Education of the Poor, plans for the diffusion of Scriptural Knowledge, &c., came under the preacher's notice, and

received his commendation. At the close of the service, a meeting was holden for transacting the business of the Association, a report of the proceedings of the Committee during the past year was read, from which it appeared that they were unable to continue the services of a Missionary beyond the period of his engagement at the last Annual Meeting, viz. for three months; but in the absence of so valuable an instrument for the dissemination of genuine Christianity, they endeavoured, according to their limited means to pursue other plans for the advancement of their common cause, among which may be mentioned the publication of a tract addressed to a "Clergyman resident near the town of Maidstone," in reply to his animadversions upon a Tract that had been previously published, entitled, "Facts relating to the Unitarian Controversy," and "Serious Questions to all Lovers of Christian Truth," by the Rev. B. Mardon. It contains, together with the facts in proof of Unitarianism, an ample reply to every statement which the Clergyman, ardently desirous of establishing the Trinitarian faith, was able to allege on that side of the question; and the great advantage which the author possesses on the score of talent and scriptural learning, and above all, of Christian liberality, will be sufficiently manifest from this pamphlet, which acquaints the reader with the substance of his opponent's arguments, while the valuable information it contains, in conjunction with its judicious reasonings, cannot but render it acceptable to our Unitarian brethren in general, and to all who take an impartial interest in a controversy of universal and primary importance. After the necessary business of the Association, the friends proceeded to the Star Inn, where a company consisting of both sexes, to the number of one hundred and twelve, dined together. Mr. Ellis, of Maidstone, presided on the occasion, and by his very efficient exertions contributed greatly to the enjoyment of the meeting.

J. G.

North-Eastern Unitarian Association.

THE North-Eastern Association of Unitarian Christians was holden at *Lynn*, on Thursday, the 29th of June, and was respectably attended by ministers and friends from the congregations in the connexion. Mr. Edward Tagart, of the Octagon Chapel, Norwich, preached in the morning from Gal. v. 1; after which the business of the Association was transacted. The ministers and friends, to the number of between sixty and seventy, male and female, then dined together at

the Crown Tavern. Mr. W. Selby, minister of the Chapel at Lynn, was invited to the Chair, and the afternoon was passed in great Christian harmony.

W. STANGER, Secretary.

Lynn, July 19, 1826.

Southern Unitarian Society.

THE Annual Meeting of the *Southern Unitarian Society* was held at Newport, in the Isle of Wight, on Wednesday, the 5th of July. The Rev. J. Mitchelson, of Poole, introduced the service, the Rev. J. B. Bristowe delivered the second prayer, and the Rev. W. J. Fox preached to a deeply attentive and admiring audience, an eloquent sermon on Religious Liberty, from 2 Cor. iii. 17: "Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." After service in the morning, the Rev. Michael Maurice was called to the Chair, and the report of the Secretary, Mr. D. B. Price was read, from which it appeared that the finances were in a flourishing state, and that in the course of the last year several new members had been added to the Society. One passage of the report may be extracted as evincing the usefulness of the Society: "If the cause of Unitarianism is indeed making progress, its first fruits might be expected to appear in our families and congregations. The increasing desire on the part of our members to receive and make use of the tracts from our catalogue, and the fact that the greater number of those selected are works calculated to promote family devotion and the religious instruction of youth, together with the smaller class of controversial tracts, seems to give assurance that such a progress is really going on."

In the evening, the Rev. M. Maurice introduced the service, and the Rev. W. J. Fox delivered an admirable Exposition on the Lord's Prayer, proving that the tenor of it was decidedly Unitarian, and distinctly taught the doctrines of the Unity of God, his paternity, the unpurchased mercy of the Supreme Being and his universal Providence. The conclusion of the discourse, in which the preacher appealed against the conduct of Trinitarians in denying the Christian name to those whose faith and worship are formed so completely in accordance with the beautiful model of devotion left by our Lord, must have produced a powerful impression on all who heard it. Between the services, forty persons dined together on the occasion, and strangers were present from Bath, Poole, Chichester, Southampton, Portsmouth, Brading, and Ryde. It is hoped that the benefit of the services of the day will be long experienced by the members of the Society in an in-

creased desire to diffuse the knowledge of divine truth; and to adorn it by a holy practice and conversation.

E. K.

Western Unitarian Society.

THE Annual Meeting was held at Taunton, on Wednesday, the 19th of July. Instead of an evening service on the day of the general meeting, (an arrangement for which there is hardly sufficient time, and which on many accounts appears objectionable,) the more convenient plan was adopted of religious worship in the Chapel on the preceding evening. It was commenced by the Rev. S. Walker, of Crewkerne, who read the Scriptures and prayed. A sermon was delivered by the Rev. H. Acton, of Exeter, from 2 Cor. x. 7, distinguished by forcible reasoning and persuasive eloquence. The object of the discourse was to repress a sectarian spirit, and, from the present imperfection of our knowledge, to inculcate the great duty of mutual forbearance and Christian charity. It is difficult to suppose that any person who heard it could fail to imbibe some portion of the liberality which it recommended and displayed.

On the morning of Wednesday, the public service was introduced by the Rev. H. Clarke, of Frenchay, near Bristol, and continued by the Rev. H. Acton. The sermon, agreeably to the announcement, was delivered by the Rev. W. J. Fox, of London. His text was Acts xviii. 4, "And he *reasoned* in the synagogue every Sabbath." This eloquent preacher, in the energetic and luminous style so peculiar to him, most powerfully enforced the right and the duty of exercising with humility, but with all the vigour of our minds, our reasoning powers on the momentous subject of religion. Those, he said, who advocate the prostration of the understanding in this important concern, fall into the dilemma of making use of arguments to convince others that they are incapable of being influenced by arguments! They, observed the preacher, who adopt religious opinions without examination, and disclaim the propriety of exercising their understandings in determining the truth of their creed, "purchase their mess of pottage with the sacrifice of the great birthright of humanity." Should the sermon be printed, it will prove a valuable addition to the Society's catalogue.

After the service, the members met in the Chapel to transact the business of the Society, the Rev. Dr. Davies in the Chair. Several new members were admitted. A proposition was made that the sum of £100 out of the funds of the

society should be contributed to the British and Foreign Unitarian Association. Though all united in best wishes for the welfare of this valuable Association, it was objected to such a disposition of the very limited funds of the Society, from the desirableness of having a small sum in hand to meet any emergency or important object more immediately connected with the Society's plans: and it was stated by members of the Committee that the present moderate surplus was not likely to accrue again, as the rule for requiring from every new member an entrance of 10s. 6d. (the source of this balance) was repealed. It was also contended, that the meeting was incompetent, consistently with the rules, to make this appropriation of the funds; and it was urged that members should individually put down their names as subscribers to the London Association. After much friendly discussion, it was decided on a division, that the sum of £10 should be given to the above Society.

It was determined that the next Annual Meeting should be held at Exeter.

It was also resolved, unanimously, "That the warmest thanks of this Society be given to the Rev. W. J. Fox for the excellent, eloquent and highly-useful discourse delivered this day, and that he be earnestly requested to publish the same, the Society engaging to take 250 copies."

The meeting was attended by members from London, Bristol, Bath, Bridgewater, Langport, Yeovil, Ilminster, Crewkerne, Bridport, Honiton, Exeter, Crediton, &c. About seventy sat down to a dinner prepared at the Castle Inn, Dr. Blake in the Chair. After the cloth was removed, ladies were admitted, agreeably to a notice previously given. About forty attended, and were accommodated with seats at the end of the large dining room. This custom has not been usual at the meetings of this Society: but it was a source of much satisfaction to the members present, that their female friends were favoured with the opportunity of hearing the eloquent and interesting observations of the various speakers.

Each toast was introduced by the worthy Chairman with some very appropriate remarks, and the company were delighted with the eloquent speeches of Mr. Fox and others, upon the occasion of particular toasts. Mr. Fox described the objects of the London Association in the most animated and impressive language, when success to that Institution was given. The present and probable progress of Unitarianism he delineated in glowing terms. To the revered me-

mory of Dr. Priestley he paid an eloquent and feeling tribute of respect. The meeting was greatly interested in the speeches of Mr. Acton. Dr. Davies and Mr. Clarke were attentively listened to. When "Absent Members" were given, particular reference was made to the present impaired state of Dr. Carpenter's health, which occasioned his absence, and required a temporary suspension of his active duties; the warmest wishes for his restoration were expressed. The progress of the Somerset, Gloucester and Wilts Unitarian Missionary Association was described as being satisfactory. To the good taste and good feeling of their respectable and judicious Chairman, Dr. Blake, the party were greatly indebted for the pleasure they enjoyed, and many who are accustomed to attend these annual associations considered that the present meeting even surpassed in interest (if possible) those held on former occasions. The company broke up soon after seven o'clock, and tea parties were formed at Dr. Blake's, Dr. Davies's, Mr. Meade's, Mr. Stone's, &c.

There is reason to believe that these annual meetings of Unitarian Societies are useful in drawing persons of opposite sentiments to the public religious services of the day, and thus inducing an inquiry into the tenets of Unitarians, or at any rate in removing some of the prejudices which exist against them. But the greatest advantage arising from them is probably derived by the members themselves in the comfort they experience from the knowledge of the gradual extension of Unitarianism, in the rational employment of the period of a social meal (an hour too often sullied by licentious conversation), in hearing the important requirements of their religious creed powerfully enforced, in having their hearts awakened and expanded by impressive eloquence to the best interests of the human race, and, in the encouragement they thus receive, steadily and fearlessly to persevere in what they believe to be the path of truth and duty. Such at least it is conceived are the impressions of those who had the pleasure of attending the late meeting at Taunton.

Protestant Society for the Protection of Religious Liberty.

(Concluded from p. 376.)

ON thanks being voted by acclamation to the Chairman, the Marquis of LANGDOWNE rose amidst loud cheers of the assembly, and said,—I feel that it will be impossible for me to quit this room without expressing the deep sense I enter-

tain of the much too flattering terms in which the Resolution you have just carried has been penned. The only return I can make for the kindness you have evinced, is, to state with that sincerity which has justly been described as the first of virtues, the real and heartfelt satisfaction which I feel in finding myself honoured by the situation in which I now stand, in a meeting dedicated to the noble purpose of protecting Religious Liberty. I entreat you to feel assured that if I have come here to-day by invitation, on a day which may perhaps rather be considered as a day of review, I shall not be found wanting among you without invitation on the day of combat. I say combat, for I will not honour with the name of conflict that series of petty persecutions, that little warfare of hostile but I trust of impotent religious intolerance, which has been described in the speech of your most eloquent and able Secretary. I will not allow myself to think that you can be endangered by that fire of petty musketry with which you are now assailed, while I remember how your forefathers so nobly withstood all those sufferings to which they had been exposed in different times, and in defence of their religion and their country, from the heavy cannon fired by an intolerant, a bigoted, a persecuting, and therefore a wicked Government. In this country you have the law with you, and I hope you will soon have it more so; and while I shall not be expected in this case to express a definite opinion with respect to any particular measure on which in another place I may be called to legislate, after having there heard all that then can be urged for and against such measures, still I trust that I may appeal to your observation of all my public life, and may ask whether you do not anticipate that my conduct will, upon all those matters, be determined by a desire upon every occasion, as the opportunity shall arise, to preserve and to secure the most inestimable blessing which a subject of a free country can possibly enjoy. I assure you, that it is with great pleasure that I behold the meeting of to-day, not only because it affords a great and useful facility for procuring information which is essential to you all, and of obtaining the enjoyment of those rights common to you all, but also because I think the free interchange of opinions between persons differing in some shades in their religious opinions, but uniting in the worship of one Saviour and of one God, is in itself attended not only with great temporal, but, if I may be allowed the expression, with great spiritual advantage. You not only learn to cherish your own peculiar

principles with increased anxiety, but also to regard the principles of others with augmented liberality, and to revere those great principles in which all who address one Providence must certainly unite. With sincerity I repeat, that as it regards every relation which I can fill to society, I am proud to find myself here this day. As a man, I feel anxious to unite in preserving to others that right which I wish to preserve for myself—a free exercise of my own intellect, that first great gift of Providence to man! As a political member of society, I feel anxious that the blessings of the constitution under which I live shall be extended, without distinction, to all, and that the attachment of all its subjects shall be riveted by that which can alone consecrate and confirm attachment, a participation in all the rights and privileges of the land. And such a participation I would extend to all, and to those who differ from me most I would extend it in the greatest degree, because I believe that such participation will be finally the greatest corrective of all false opinions, and the bond by which all opinions may be bound together in the common cause of Christianity. I have said thus much as a man and as a member of the political society in which I live; but I also feel that I am a member of the Church of England. And as a member of that Church, I must add, that I particularly feel that her interests are concerned in connecting her existence with the sanction of a free exercise of religious worship throughout the empire. I am far from thinking that she can with propriety or even safety rely upon the rotten props and the treacherous defences of penalties imposed upon consciences and of premiums held out to hypocrisy. She owes it no less to her safety than to her fair fame, to rest her existence and prosperity, protected as she ought to be since established by the law, upon the broad basis of religious freedom, and by allowing men to approach their God through that medium they may think best calculated to the honour of his name, and above all, by securing to every man that liberty of conscience and liberty of thought, which is not only

“Unsung
By poets, and by senators unpraised,
but of which we may also add,
“Which whoso tastes can be enslaved
no more.”

I will now take my leave, (which I should not have done so early was it not that my family are in the country, and through which I have attended with some inconvenience to myself,) deeply impressed

with the able and forcible arguments I have heard employed by your very eloquent Secretary, and by the multitude of facts which he has stated, from all which there can be but one conclusion drawn—the importance of the cause which this Society advocates to the safety and prosperity of the country.

Mr. John Wilks again rose and said, I shall not pay due attention to the hospitable feeling which glows within your bosoms if I allow this opportunity to escape, without expressing our united sentiments of gratitude and respect to the noble Lord (Dacre) who this day so kindly and unexpectedly honours us with his presence. On a former occasion, at our particular request, he favoured us with presiding at our Annual Meeting, and unsolicited on this occasion favours us with his company; and we cannot allow him to depart without expressing our regard and gratitude for his continued support to the great cause we have met to protect—and of our confidence that he will live and die the Friend and Advocate of Civil and Religious Liberty throughout the world. Mr. Wilks then moved a vote of thanks to his Lordship, consonant with the sentiments of his speech, which was carried with acclamations.

Lord DACRE rose, amid reiterated cheers, and said,—However reluctant I may at all times be to address so large and respectable an assembly as the present, I must peculiarly feel my inadequacy to such a task after the eloquent address that you have just heard. Had I the eloquence of the noble Lord, who this day fills your chair, I might dilate on the report which has been made by your industrious and very eloquent Secretary. Allow me on this occasion to assure you, that my determined support shall at all times be given to the utmost of my power, to the great principles which this Society endeavours to uphold. I will also venture to say, that while you have had to encounter much of vexation and contemptible opposition, you are still protected by the law of the land—and the very nature of the opposition, as it manifests the malice, displays also the impotence of your foes. So long as you continue thus to meet—so long as there is this agglomeration—so long as you aid the efforts of your noble Chairman and of your able Secretary—so long will your efforts be successful in repelling the attacks and nullifying the animosity of every foe to Civil and Religious Liberty. In one view especially, I observe the operations of this Society with admiration, and hope it forms a centre from which much valuable and important information is continually emanating.

“The centre moved, a circle straight succeeds,
Another still, and still another spreads.”

With respect to the Test Act, I certainly consider it to be one of the greatest blots on the Statute Book, and to which it behoves all the friends of civil and religious liberty to address their best attention and energies. If they do so, I feel persuaded they will ultimately succeed in its removal from the code of British laws. I cannot conclude without assuring you of my sincere gratitude for the very flattering manner in which you have condescended to applaud my humble efforts. To receive the approbation and participate in the affection of our fellow-subjects, is the highest honour to which a public man can aspire—the highest gratification which a private individual can enjoy.

The following were amongst the Resolutions adopted at the Meeting :

“That while this Meeting approve of the postponement by the Committee of any application to the Legislature for the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts during the present short Session of Parliament, and amid the financial distresses of the country, yet they trust neither the Committee nor any other friends to religious freedom among the members of the Established Church or Protestant Dissenters, will ever forget the existence of those Statutes, nor neglect any fit opportunities for strenuous, extended and persevering attempts, to obtain the abrogation of laws dishonourable to a free and enlightened people—debasating the Sacrament of the Church—needless and inefficient for its protection—and degradatory to a vast and increasing body of honourable, loyal, patriotic, independent men.

“That while this Meeting would allay the excessive anxiety manifested as to the Registration of Births and Baptisms among Protestant Dissenters, since their present Registrations are useful and convenient, yet they much approve the application of the Committee to his Majesty's Government for the establishment of a public and authorized, though optional, Registration of Births, which, including Methodists and Dissenters of all denominations, would obviate many existing evils, and place them, in a matter obviously important, in a situation equal with the members of the Established Church; and they direct the Committee not to relax in their exertions till they obtain from Government and the Parliament this much-needed and just relief.

“That as the continuance and progress of religious liberty in the British isles, and the removal of existing wrongs, and attainment of relief and right, may

mainly depend on the future representatives of the people in the Commons' House of Parliament, this Meeting feel it due to their forefathers, who struggled and died in the cause of freedom—to themselves, who desire its triumphs—and to posterity, who shall be blest by its success, to entreat the ministers and members of their Society, and all friends to liberal principles throughout the empire at the approaching general election, not to compromise those principles, and avowedly to bestow their influence and their votes only on candidates of congenial spirit, who approve a general education, the circulation of the Scriptures, and the repeal of the Test and Corpora-

tion Acts, and who will promote universal Improvement, Liberty and Peace."

We have been informed that Messrs. *Willmer and Co.*, Booksellers, Liverpool, have opened a communication with *New York, Philadelphia, and Boston*, (America,) for the purpose of obtaining all the *Unitarian* and other publications which appear in those places; the friends to Unitarianism will therefore have an opportunity of obtaining works at a reasonable price and with regularity.

The Rev. J. H. RYLAND has resigned the pastorate of the Unitarian congregation at *Diss*.

REGISTER OF ECCLESIASTICAL DOCUMENTS.

The Gallian Church.

(From the *Moniteur*.)

Department of Ecclesiastical Affairs and Public Instruction.

PARIS, APRIL 11.

Messrs. the Cardinal de Latil, Archbishop of Rheims; de Beauset Roquefort, Archbishop of Aix; de Nichey, Bishop of Autun, had the honour to be admitted yesterday, Monday, to an audience of the King, and in the name of the Cardinals, Archbishops and Bishops of France, who are now at Paris, they placed in the hands of his Majesty the following document:—

"Religion has but too long had reason to lament the propagation of those doctrines of impiety and licentiousness which tend to excite all the passions against the authority of divine and human laws. In their well-founded alarms, the Bishops of France have exerted themselves to preserve their flocks from this fatal contagion. Why must the success which they have a right to expect from their solicitude be defeated by attacks, of a different nature it is true, but which may lead religion and the state into new dangers?"

"Maxims received in the Church of France are openly denounced as an offence against the divine constitution of the Catholic Church, as a work lavish with schism and heresy, as a profession of political Atheism.

"How strange do the censures, pronounced without mission, without authority, appear, when we recollect the sentiments of esteem, of confidence, and of affection, which the successors of Peter, charged like him to confirm their brethren in the faith, have confidently manifested towards a Church which has always been so faithful to them!

"But what astonishes and afflicts us most, is the temerity with which attempts are made to waive an opinion that formerly arose in the midst of the anarchy and confusion in which Europe was plunged, which was always rejected by the Clergy of France, and had fallen into almost universal oblivion; an opinion which would render sovereigns dependent on the spiritual power even in temporal matters, so that it might, in certain cases, release their subjects from the oath of allegiance.

"Undoubtedly the just and good God does not give to sovereigns the right to oppress the people, to persecute religion, and to command crime and apostacy; undoubtedly also the princes of the earth are, like other Christians, subject to the spiritual power in spiritual things. But to pretend that their infidelity to the divine law would annul their titles as sovereigns, that the pontifical supremacy might go so far as to deprive them of their crowns, and to deliver them to the mercy of the multitude, is a doctrine which has no foundation either in the gospel, or in the apostolical traditions, or in the writings of the doctors, and the examples of the holy persons who adorned the brightest ages of Christian antiquity.

"In consequence, we, the undersigned Cardinals, Archbishops and Bishops, think it our duty to the King, to France, to the divine ministry which is confided to us, to the true interests of religion in the several States of Christendom, to declare that we reject the injurious qualifications by which it has been attempted to brand the maxims and the memory of our predecessors in the episcopacy; that we remain inviolably attached to the doctrine, such as they have transmitted it to us, on the rights of sovereigns, and of their full and absolute independence in tem-

poral matters, of the authority, whether direct or indirect, of all ecclesiastical power.

"But we also condemn, with all Catholics, those who, under pretext of liberties, do not fear to strike at the primacy of St. Peter and of the Roman Pontiff, his successors, instituted by Jesus Christ,—at the obedience which is due to them by all Christians, and at the majesty of the apostolic see, so venerable in the eyes of all nations as the place where the faith is taught, and the unity of the church preserved."

"We glory, in particular, in giving to the faithful the example of the most profound veneration, and of a purely filial piety towards the Pontiff whom Heaven in its mercy has elevated in our days to the chair of the Prince of the apostles."

Paris, April 3, 1826.

(Signed in the original)

"The Cardinal de la TARE, Archbishop of Sens.

The Cardinal de LATIL, Archbishop of Rheims.

FRANCIS, ancient Archbishop of Toulouse.

PIERRE-FERDINAND, Archbishop of Aix, Arles and Embrun.

PAUL AMBROISE, Archbishop of Besançon.

GUILLAUME AUBIN, Archbishop of Bourges.

MARIE-NICOLAS, Bishop of Montpellier, Archbishop of Narbonne elect.

H. E., Bishop of Autun.

C. L., Bishop of Evreux.

J. P., Bishop of Amiens.

JOSEPH, Bishop of Nantes.

C. J., Ancient Bishop of Tulle.

C. M., Bishop of Strasbourg.

J. M. DOMINIQUE, Bishop of Quimper."

Letter addressed to the King by the Archbishop of Paris.

"Paris, April 4, 1826."

"Sire,—The Cardinals, Archbishops and Bishops, at present at Paris, have thought it advisable to draw up, together, an exposition of their sentiments respecting the independence of the temporal power in matters of a purely civil nature. Though this exposition does not bear my signature, I, nevertheless, possess the same opinion; and I beg your Majesty to allow me to place in your hands the assurance of it in writing, as I have already had the honour to make to your Majesty the verbal declaration of it."

"The considerations which I have submitted to the King, and in which reflection has still further confirmed me, have alone hindered me from signing an act which contains, in respect to the limits of the Spiritual Authority, principles upon which I have had more than one occasion to declare myself even in public, and with regard to which I know of no disagreement among the pastors and the clergy of our dioceses."

"I am, with respect, Sire, your Majesty's most humble, most obedient servant, and most faithful subject,

(Signed)

"HYACINTHE, Archbishop of Paris."

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ERRATA.

P. 353, col. 2, line 10 from bottom, for "this," read *the*.

P. 355, col. 1, last line, after "all," add *of*.