

THE
Virginia Religious Magazine.

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Acquaint thyself with God, if thou would'st taste
His works. Admitted once to his embrace,
Thou shalt perceive that thou wast blind before:
Thine eye shall be instructed; and thine heart,
Made pure, shall relish, with divine delight,
Till then unfelt, what hands divine have wrought.

TASK.

No. 4]

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[Vol. I

*An Epistle, to the Citizens of Kentucky, professing Christiani-
ty; especially those that are, or have been denominated
Presbyterians; by the Rev. David Rice.*

ABOUT twenty-one years ago, I came from the state of Virginia to this country, animated, in some measure, with a hope, and pleasing prospect of cultivating the vine of the Gospel in it: and thereby doing honor to my Maker and Redeemer, in promoting the happiness of my fellow-men. In much weakness: and many imperfections of a serious nature, I have laboured ever since to promote these important purposes: and sometimes I have entertained hopes, that if not *my* labours, yet the labours of *others* engaged in the same cause, were crowned with success. At present, however, upon viewing the state of Morals and Religion in this land, my hopes are dashed, and my heart sinks within me.

I am not in the habit of being much distressed by a diversity of opinion about the modes of worship, &c.—But when the fundamental principles of the religion of Jesus are struck at, I tremble for the ark of God—I tremble to see the temporal and eternal happiness of my fellow-citizens and fellow-sinners, placed on a tremendous precipice. I find the religious opinions of my fellow christians revolutionizing with so much rapidity, and with so much confidence, preface the consequences, that my harp is hung on the willows, and my

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days are spent in mourning. However, I have determined not to give myself up wholly to despair, but to make one or two more feeble efforts, if God shall enable me, before I breathe my last.

I shall endeavor to trace out to you the way that leads from the truth, as it is contained in the word of God, to Atheism, or a degree of Scepticism equally pernicious. I mean not to enter into any argumenation upon any of the points of doctrine I shall mention; but do little more than trace out the road of error, and give my opinion.

I believe that the doctrine of particular eternal election, when properly guarded against Antinomianism and fatality, when so explained as not to destroy free Moral Agency—to supersede the use of means, nor to prevent the natural operations of second causes, is the truth, according to the sacred Scriptures, and according to sound philosophy—that it is the only doctrine that can afford a truly convinced sinner any rational ground of encouragement to seek religion in the use of means, or that can save him from black despair; and the only doctrine that can support, in the mind of a real Christian, the hope of eternal life.

I believe that the doctrines taught by the first Reformers, commonly called *the Doctrines of Grace*, viz. Of the total Moral Depravity of Human Nature—Of Regeneration of by the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Sacred Trinity—Of the Atonement—Of Justification in the sight of God, by the imputed Righteousness of Christ, the Second Person of the Trinity—and of Sanctification by the Spirit, through the truth, are important Scripture truths, naturally connected with the doctrine of Election. These are called *the Doctrines of Grace*, because they consider man as totally ruined by his apostacy from God, and make his salvation wholly depend on the free grace of God, in Christ, and naturally lead true believers in Christ, to say—"Not unto us Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name be the glory."

These doctrines are all mysterious, and some of them at least, above human comprehension; and hence the mind of man labours to get rid of them, and to display its ingenuity and gratify its pride in weeding them out, until the Christian Religion, and even Natural Religion is entirely mutilated.

The believer in Divine Revelation finds the doctrine of particular Election standing in the front of these mysteries; and to him it has a frightful appearance. Though this doctrine seems to be countenanced by a number of passages in sacred Scripture, there are difficulties attending it he cannot

surmount. His busy mind cannot reconcile somethings in it, infers a number of horrid consequences from it, paints these in frightful colours, and stares at them till he is frightened out of this article of his creed. He finds so much plausibility, or, as it appears to him, so much irresistible force in the arguments against this doctrine, and in favour of the opposite, that with the help of a little criticism on a few Greek words, he gets clear of this mystery, and for a while sits down easy, and congratulates himself on his success.

But his mind does not continue long at rest—he soon meets with another formidable mystery—The Doctrine of Original Sin. Though this doctrine seems also to be countenanced by several passages of Scripture, and accords very well with the moral state of human nature; yet he cannot conceive of the justice and propriety of a race of creatures being punished on account of the lapse of their first parents. His success in the former instance, encourages him to try his ingenuity and strength upon this mystery also—He soon succeeds. He discovers, as he thinks, in this doctrine, such a contradiction to the justice and goodness of God, that he views it with horror, and condemns it without hesitation. But still a difficulty remains. There is the depraved state of human nature—The appearance of this with the first dawn of reason—men's going astray from the very womb, speaking lies. The busy mind which has already concluded, that God does not punish Adam's posterity on account of his sin, finds out that the depravity of human nature, formerly called *Original Sin*, is only a misfortune; and that Christ came into this world, lived, suffered and died, only to save men from this misfortune and its effects. Now as a remedy for human depravity, as a way to remove the evils of this misfortune, it is found out that they may be all removed by believing—that this believing is a very easy thing—that it is as easy to believe in Christ, as to believe that 2 and 3 are equal to 5—that faith is not the gift of God—that regeneration flows naturally from faith, or is naturally connected with it: So that as matters now stand, it is very easy to get free from the misfortune of human depravity. Now the evil of sin is much lessened; many of the difficulties of the Christian life removed. God appears all love and mercy; the terrors of vindictive justice are all removed; a sweet serenity fills the mind; it experiences a joy it never felt before, and infers from this happiness the truth of the system which produces it.

Though now the most distressing mysteries are removed from the Christian system, yet there are others as inconsis-

tent with his philosophical pride as those were. There is the doctrine of the Trinity—a Triune Deity—three Persons, but one Divine Nature. This reason cannot digest, it is so unphilosophical. “If there are three persons there must be three Gods, which is unnecessary and absurd. If this doctrine is true, Christianity is a system of Tritheism, and Christians worship three Gods instead of one.” The mind being inured to the business of annihilating mysteries, and become dexterous at the work, falls upon this without hesitation, and soon has it cleared out of the way. He discovers that the Spirit of God is no more a distinct Person from the Father, than his own spirit is a distinct person from himself. He finds out that Jesus Christ the Son of God, is not, properly speaking, a Divine Person of the same substance with the Father, but a person in whom God manifests himself to his creatures: “God manifest in the flesh.” Perhaps he proceeds a step farther, and finds out that Jesus of Nazareth is a mere man who never existed until conceived in the womb of the Virgin Mary; a mighty Prophet sent into the world to restore the Religion of Nature, which had been lost; to set an example of patience and resignation, and to confirm his doctrine by his death. But we are not done with these mysteries yet. There is the doctrine of the Atonement, and of Justification by a Vicarious Righteousness—We have this to remove; but we are already prepared for it. God now appears so merciful, and so entirely void of vindictive justice, that it would be easy to get clear of this mystery, were it not for a number, and a great number too, of stubborn passages of Scripture—but by one means or other, and particularly by the help of a little criticism on the Greek word *Katallage* or Atonement, he surmounts this difficulty also; and thus his work is nearly completed. He congratulates himself on his successful exertions. He has rid Christianity of all its frightful and unreasonable mysteries—He has reduced it to a rational system of Theism. It is fit to be credited and embraced by men of genius improved by the greatest philosophical research. He thinks every Deist may be rationally expected now to embrace Divine Revelation and become a Christian, for he has removed all the supposed absurdities that used to fright them from it. But with regard to most Deists he is greatly mistaken; for the greatest of all objections, the *Morals*, the *MORALS* of the Bible still remain. The Bible still denounces damnation upon all impenitent sinners. The sensible Deist, instead of being converted, looks on and secretly smiles to see the folly of the Christian, in thinking to con-

vert him, while he himself is establishing the Deistical system.—Deists see that the Christian system, thus mutilated, is the same as their own; only it holds out the terrors of *certain* damnation to offenders, while their creed leaves this matter *doubtful*. Their system ascribes the honor of their discoveries to the strength, improvements and exertions of their own minds; while the other humbles the pride of their understandings to the feet of Divine Revelation; and they have no relish for this humiliation of their understanding. They enjoy the same kind of pleasure in ascribing all their discoveries to the strength of their own minds, that our *illuminated* Christian finds in weeding out the mysteries, and removing the supposed absurdities of Christianity.

But the Christian we have in our eye, who thinks himself enlightened above his fellows, if he thinks it prudent and conducive to his main design, can also annihilate this terror of eternal damnation. Some of this character, through the aid of the Armenian notion of Universal Redemption, remove this objection also out of the way. By the help of a small criticism on the Greek word *aion*, they make the important discovery, that the word *eternal* signifies but *a little while*,—that Hell was built in mercy to the damned, and was designed to bring them to repentance.

Now the doctrines of Regeneration by the Divine Spirit—Of pardon and acceptance through the Atonement and Righteousness of Jesus Christ—Of Sanctification by the Spirit's application of Divine Truth—and almost all the peculiarities of the Christian Religion are gone, and Christianity reduced to a system of Deism, only a little improved, and founded upon Divine Revelation.

Let the man we have been supposing to take these several steps, only imagine his own reason capable of learning from the book of Nature, the true character of God, and by one easy step more, he renounces his Bible, and commences entire Deist. He now reads, or tries to read only the book of Nature. He turns leaf after leaf—Here he finds provision made for the happiness of sensitive beings, in the system of which he is a part; but in the next page he finds provision made for their misery, which makes him doubt whether the Author of the system is a benevolent being or not—In the next page he reads in moral agents, sensibility, benevolence, and compassion, which induces him to think the Author of the system to be morally good;—but he reads on, and soon finds malice, revenge, envy, hatred, injustice, and intemperance, which confounds his ideas.—He knows not what to think of his Maker—He can scarcely conceive of the

Deity as an intelligent, designing agent, but calls him *Animus Mundi*, the soul of the creation, the principle of existence &c.—He knows not, I say, what to make of his God. From his works he can form no consistent idea of his character. A being without a beginning,—an eternity before time began,—an eternal solitary God!—Something must have existed from eternity, or nothing ever could have existed;—this existence is a necessary existence. But why might not the Universe have enjoyed this necessary existence as well as a Deity, the supposed cause of its existence?—Here he becomes an entire sceptic, or is plunged into the greatest of mysteries, by which all others are swallowed up,—a system of dependent, mutable beings, possessing independent existence.—Here he stops. He can advance no farther.—Here is the death and grave of all reason and virtue. The world is now a scene of madness and misery; and no wise and benevolent head of the Universe, to steer the good man through the tempestuous Ocean.

Thus I have pointed out to you the natural grades of error. It is a beaten way, which many have trod formerly, and which many are treading in the present day. I have not mentioned a single error, but what I understand some of my fellow-citizens have adopted, and discover a great attachment to. They seem to think they are making new discoveries,—that the present race of Christians are more enlightened than the former; and that they are advancing in religious knowledge, and approaching near to the Millenium, when in reality they are only raising old errors from their graves, many of which distressed, and greatly injured the Church of Christ, many hundred years ago, and have been so long dead, they are almost buried in oblivion.—These several grades of error, we shall set down, in order to number them, & give them the names which they commonly bear.

1st. The first step is from Calvinism to Arminianism. Here I believe many good men, whose hearts are sounder than their heads, stop, and proceed no farther in the road that leads to Atheism.—

2d. From Arminianism to Universalism.

3d. From Universalism to Pelagianism. (1)

(1) Pelagians—A sect who appeared about the fifth, or end of the fourth century. They maintained the following doctrines—1st. That Adam was by nature mortal, & whether he had sinned or not, would certainly have died—2. That the consequences of Adam's sin, was confined to his own

- 4th. From Pelagianism to Semipelagianism. (2)
- 5th. From Semipelagianism to Arianism. (3)
- 6th. From Arianism to Socinianism. (4)
- 7th. From Socinianism to Deism.
- 8th. From Deism to Atheism.

When Christians arrive to the 5th grade, they have freed themselves from all the distinguishing features of the Christian Religion, and are become *Deists*, while they think they are nobly engaged, in freeing Christianity from the mysteries and absurdities, which had been attached to it in the dark ages of ignorance and credulity, and fixed upon it by *creeds* and confessions.

There are two ways of propagating and establishing this

person—3. That new born infants are in the same situation with Adam before the fall—4. That the law qualified men for the Kingdom of Heaven, and was founded upon equal promises with the Gospel—5. That the general resurrection of the dead, does not follow in virtue of our Saviour's resurrection—6. That the grace of God is given according to our merits &c.

(2) Semipelagians, are such as retain any of the heretical opinions of the Pelagians mentioned above.

(3) Arians, are followers of Arius, a Presbyter of the Church of Alexandria, about the year 315, who maintained that the Son of God was totally, and essentially distinct from the Father; that he was first and noblest of those beings whom God had created, the instrument by whose subordinate operation he formed the Universe, and therefore inferior to the Father, both in nature and dignity: also that the Holy Ghost was not God, but created by the power of the Son.

(4) Socinians; they maintained that Jesus Christ was a mere man, who had no existence before he was conceived by the Virgin Mary; that the Holy Ghost is not a distinct person; but the Father is truly and properly God. They own that the name of God is given in the Holy Scriptures, to Jesus Christ, but contend that it is only a deputed title which however vests him with an absolute sovereignty over all created beings, and renders him an object of worship, to men and angels. They deny the doctrines of justification, and imputed righteousness; and say that Christ only preached the truth to mankind, set before them in himself, an example of heroic virtue, and sealed his doctrines with his blood. Original sin and absolute predestination, they esteem scholastic chimeras.

system of error viz. by philosophical reasoning, and by the appearance of much *piety, benevolence and zeal*. The first is comparatively slow in its operations, and chiefly addresses the faculty of reason—The second makes more rapid progress, as it seizes the religious affections, or passions of men, and by this handle they are suddenly drawn away, without taking time maturely to think, and deliberately ponder their *paths*—They are led away by the apparent piety of their *leaders*, and the strong persuasion they have, that God is with these men.—The above account is not mere theory, it has been often realized by individuals, and by societies. Several individuals in our day and country, who might be particularly named, have trodden pretty exactly in the above steps, until they have arrived at Atheism, or something equally absurd, or equally destructive of piety and virtue.

About 30 years ago, as I have been informed, the Christian religion was in a pretty flourishing state, among the Protestant dissenters in England—Their houses of worship were much crowded, and the people all attention. They concluded however at length, that *Confessions of Faith* were hurtful things, which cramped the mind, and put a stop to free enquiry, and improvements in knowledge. They resolved to let every candidate for the Gospel *Ministry* draw up his own *Confession of Faith*—these candidates dropped one mystery after another, until they got to the fifth grade of error. The people convinced by their masterly reasoning, followed them. After the novelty was over, and the minds of men became calm, these doctrines produced their genuine effects—the zeal of the people subsided, they dwindled away, and a number of flourishing congregations were reduced almost to a state of non-existence. In this torpid state they remained for some time; until at length, there *sprang* up a set of avengical preachers, who revived the long exploded doctrines of the reformation. The people by this time saw the bad effects of *Arianism*, and *Socinianism*, in the principles and lives of their fathers; exploded the new refined system; & again embraced the principles of the reformation. On which, religion revived, and several of these congregations rose as from the *dead*, and again became flourishing societies. We are informed, that late in the last century, the Ministers in Germany, got to weeding Christianity of its mysteries, and trying to render it more philosophical. They succeeded—and soon reduced it to a stock, fit for the reception of the system of the Illuminees; or rather of Illuminism, the systematical subversion of all systems. The consequence was, distraction and desolation were spread, over a considerable

part of Europe, while the religion of *Jesus* lay bleeding in the dust.

The principles of Semipelagianism, Arianism, and Socinianism, make God so merciful, and the way to Heaven so easy, that in time it naturally lulls the mind to sleep, and makes it indifferent about all religion. Men do not consider that "A God all mercy, is a God unjust." They have read "He that believeth shall be saved," and are informed, that "believing is the easiest thing in the world."

They can prepare for Heaven at any time—they are busy now about other things, or taken up with other pleasures and pursuits—in due time however, they design to believe, and be saved. This *idea* is not the creature of my own mind. I have seen it realized in numberless instances, and observed the sad effects of this easy way, in preventing all proper timorous exertions, to get to Heaven. This is the natural effect of such notions, the proper tendency of these doctrines. The present generation of Christians may not thus improve them, their principles, imbibed from a better system, and their present zeal may preserve them from it; but it will produce, and has in some measure produced this effect upon others; if their children inherit their notions, they will produce this effect in them. Yea, in many instances, these notions will convert their children into Deists and Atheists. We who are praying for the advancement of Christianity, and for the destruction of infidelity, and predicting the commencement of Christ's Millennial reign, are imprudently, and undesignedly preparing the way for a nation of unbelievers to be born in a day; we are contrary to our design and expectation opening the flood-gate for impiety and immorality, to pour forth and deluge this happy land. This my *dear brethren* is the prospect that lies before me; this evil I see already commenced, and forebode its greater increase: It is this that fills my heart with daily anxiety, and causes my *harp* to hang on the willows.

I beg leave to mention a few things, which I think were the causes which have produced a number of the errors mentioned above, or given them currency among the people.

1. One of these, I think, was a mistaken opinion about the extraordinary bodily agitations which have appeared in our worshipping assemblies. They were looked upon by too many to be miraculous and immediately from God; and hence the lively and impressive ideas that persons had in these exercises, were all thought to be from Heaven, and therefore true. They judged of truth by these impressions, and not of these impressions by the truths of God's word.

The apprehension that God was at work in an extraordinary way, and that they were the subjects of his miraculous operations, agitated their whole frame, and considerably affected their imaginations, which became therefore more lively and strong. When they saw others under the same bodily exercises, and heard them expressing the manifestations they had received, they looked upon them to be under the same divine influence, and their ideas and impressions also to be from God. This exposed them to be led astray by their own imaginations, and by the imaginations of others, of whom they had conceived an high opinion. The error here was, men's taking something else than the written word of God, as the rule of their *faith*. It prepared them to be imposed on by any body who should advance a specious error with great warmth, and engagedness in religion.

2. Another thing that prepared the minds of many for the reception of error, was their high expectation of the speedy approach of the Millenium. This they looked upon to be an extraordinary event, and were ready to conclude every thing that was extraordinary, was a mean conducive to this extraordinary event. It was easy to see, that they looked upon all former revivals as vastly inferior to the present, and this put them in a great measure above learning any thing from the experience and observation of others. Every hint of disorder and irregularity, however kindly intended, was looked upon as opposition to the work of God; which destroyed the influence of those who gave them. In some places where very few were added to the communion of the Church, not half so many as had been known in other revivals, it was esteemed the greatest revival that ever was known, merely because there was an extraordinary commotion among the people. And even now, when the *work* is evidently in a retrograde motion, and half the Christians in the land are mourning over the decay of piety, and the growth of error; a number are full of the idea of Millenium, and seem insensible of the decay of religion, and of the strengthening of infidelity; and confident that they are advancing in truth and piety, while some of them are in the broad road that leads to Atheism.

3. The generous sentiments imbibed by Presbyterians, and acted upon perhaps imprudently, encouraged some to speak very freely of creeds and confessions. The reflections were popular, the notion was eagerly embraced, and many were resolved to have no *confession* but the *Bible*, which they had read too superficially, and very imperfectly understood. They were then prepared to imbibe every new notion, ad-

vanced by a popular warm preacher, which he said was agreeable to scripture. They were like a parcel of boys suddenly tumbled out of a boat, who had been unaccustomed to swim, and knew not the way to the shore. Some fixed upon one error, and some upon another: most however of which I have heard, were such as tended to the abolition of Christian mysteries. (5)

My dear Christian Brethren, the 1st, 2d, 3d, 4th, if not the 5th grade of error mentioned above, some of us formerly called Presbyterians, I fear have unhappily trodden; it evidently appears that the other steps are natural and easy, after these are gone over, it requires but little exertion to accomplish the rest. Shall I address you on this subject, or shall I, shall I, forbear? Shall I vent the anxious mournful feelings of my heart? or shall I restrain them, and pour out my sorrows in the silent shades of retirement? Shall I retreat to some lonely cell, and hide myself from the church and the world, where I shall see, and hear of their errors, their vices, and their miseries no more? and spend the small remnant of my days, in endeavoring to converse only with God, and my own heart! Have I so far lost the confidence of my Christian friends, as to be esteemed their enemy, because I tell them the truth? an enemy to the Church of Christ, because I labour to guard it against mistakes, and point out those things which threaten its destruction? Shall I be despised, because I mourn over the cause of Christ, when I see it bleeding at a thousand veins? Am I an opposer of a revival of religion,

(5) I have frequently in the course of this address, communicated the idea, that many things in the Christian system are mysterious, and lie in some measure beyond the comprehension of our present powers; I would not by this be understood to mean, that any thing in Christianity is in the least degree contradictory to reason, or absurd in its own nature. There is certainly a great difference between a proposition being absolutely beyond the powers of our present comprehension, and its being contrary to the first principles of reason. The proposition that the three angles of every triangle are equal to two right angles, is one absolutely beyond the comprehension of the illiterate husbandman; is it therefore not true? I am fully convinced, there is nothing in the sacred Scriptures which is contrary to sound Philosophy. But I am equally convinced, that *none by searching can find out God, nor can any know the Almighty unto perfection.*

when I say the jirks, dancing, &c. are not God's instituted means of *Grace*, nor Scriptural evidences of true religion? and that when they are voluntary, they are a corruption of God's worship? Should I say, that enthusiasm and spiritual pride, a vain conceit, self-sufficiency, and self-confidence have evidently made their appearance among us, and are undoubtedly tarnishing the beauty of the religion of *Jesus*, which is modest, humble, teachable, meek, and lovely. Shall I be counted an enemy to that *Jesus*, whose cause has been long dear to me, and which I have endeavored to exert my small abilities to support? Believe me to be your friend, believe me, though very unworthy, and insufficient, to be a friend *to*, and advocate *for* the cause of Christianity. I now consider myself as standing on the verge of the *grave*, my proper position; and am soon about to step into the presence of God, my Judge; and in this solemn posture, I humbly and earnestly beseech you, yea, I solemnly charge you in the presence of my Judge, seriously to pause, reflect, and think. Examine your opinions and religious practices, by the written word of God; call in all the help you can, to understand, and rightly apply the Scriptures; view and consider the steps that lead to Atheism, that bottomless gulph of *mysteries*; consider the steps others have taken, and where they have landed; avoid all Semipelagian, Arian and Socinian notions; see how directly they lead to infidelity. I beseech you by all the regard you have to the honor of God, to the virtue and happiness of your fellow-citizens, to the interests of the Redeemers kingdom, to the happiness and comfort of many of your fellow Christians, and especially to the reformation and salvation of a rising generation, and even generations yet unborn. By these regards I say, I humbly and earnestly beseech you, seriously to pause and think. Pause, and think again. Have you not been led on nearly in the steps I have pointed out, and which I imperfectly pointed out to some leaders near a year and an half ago? Are you not now standing on ground, which you would at that time have shuddered at the thought of approaching? and can you tell me where you, or your leaders will stop? Have you not been led from Calvinism to Arminianism? From Arminianism to Semipelagianism? from that to Arianism? from Arianism to Socinianism? Thus you have arriven to the 5th grade in the road of error; which is five eighths of the way to *Atheism*. Had the whole been discovered to you at first, you never could have been brought to the precipice, on which you now stand. But you have been artfully prepared for each step, before you were informed of what lay before you; your minds have been illuminated, (if

I may use such a contradiction) by the mists of darkness, artfully cast before you. I again beseech you, seriously to pause and think. Pause and think again. I earnestly beseech you, for my heart is in it—pause and think! pause and think again!!!—Be not led by your feelings, they a fallacious guide; suffer not your judgments to be biased, by your love or dislike to any description of men. I speak as unto wise men, judge ye what I say. Now my Christian friends, I do with a heart bleeding for *Zion's* wounds, with love and esteem for you, bid you an affectionate farewell.

DAVID RICE.

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To the Editors of the Virginia Religious Magazine.

The following account, is taken from Evans' "Sketch of the denominations of the Christian world:" and was first published in an edition of that work in the year 1801.

As it shews the length to which men may be carried by zeal without knowledge, and the danger of departing from that decency and order in divine worship, enjoined by the Apostle in 1 Cor. xiv. I hope you will give it a place in the Magazine.

A SUBSCRIBER.

THE JUMPERS.

ORIGINALLY this singular practice of *jumping* during the time allotted for religious instruction, was confined to the people called Methodists in Wales, the followers of Harris, Rowland, Williams, and others. The practice began in the western part of the country about the year 1760. It was soon after defended by Mr. William Williams (the Welch poet, as he is sometimes styled) in a pamphlet, which was patronized by the abettors of jumping in religious assemblies, and viewed by the serious and grave with disapprobation. However in the course of a few years, the advocates of groaning, and loud talking, as well as loud singing; repeating the same line or stanza over and over thirty or forty times, became more numerous, and were found among some of the other denominations in the principality, and continue to this

day. Several of the more zealous itinerant preachers in Wales, recommended the people to cry out *Gazoniant* (the Welch word for glory) Amen, &c. &c. to put themselves in violent agitations; and finally to *jump* until they were quite exhausted, so as often to be obliged to fall down on the floor, or the field where this kind of worship was held. If any thing in the profession of religion that is absurd and unreasonable, were to surprise us, it would be the censure that was cast upon those who gently attempted to stem this tide, which threatened the destruction of true religion as a *reasonable service*. Where the essence of true religion is placed in customs and usages, which have no tendency to sanctify the several powers through the medium of the understanding, we ought not to be surprized, when we contemplate instances of extravagance and apostacy. Human nature, in general, is not capable of such exertions for any length of time, and when the spirits become exhausted, and the heat kindled by sympathy is subsided, the unhappy persons sink into themselves, and seek for support in intoxication. It is not to be doubted but there are many sincere and pious persons to be found among this class of people—men who think they are doing God's service, whilst they are the victims of fanaticism. These are objects of compassion, and doubtless will find it in God. But it is certain, from incontestible facts, that a number of persons have attached themselves to those religious societies, who place a very disproportioned stress on the practice of *jumping*, from suspicious motives.

The theory and practice of such a religion are easily understood; for the man who possesses an unblushing confidence, and the greatest degree of muscular energy, is likely to excel in bodily exercise. Upon the whole, it is probable, as such an exercise has no countenance in reason or revelation, that it has been, and still is productive of more evil than good. Many of the ministers, who have been foremost in encouraging *jumping*, seemed to have nothing in view but the gratification of their own vanity, inflaming the passions of the multitude by extravagant representations of the character of the Deity—the condition of man—and the design of the Saviour's mission. The minister that wishes *not to study* to shew himself of God, has only to favour *jumping* with it's appendages: for as reason is out of the question, in such a religion *he* can be under no fear of shocking it. It is some consolation to real religion, to add, that this practice is on the decline, as the more sober or conscientious, who were at first at a loss to judge where this practice might carry them, have seen its pernicious tendency.

Such is the account of the JUMPERS, which with a few alterations, has been transmitted me by a respectable minister, who frequently visits the principality. It is to be hoped, that the exercise of common sense will in time recover them from these extravagant extacies, which pain the rational friends of revelation, and yield matter of exultation to the advocates of infidelity.

About the year 1785, I myself happened very accidentally to be present at a meeting which terminated in *jumping*. It was held in the open air, on a Sunday evening, near Newport, in Monmouthshire. The preacher was one of the Lady Huntingdon's students, who concluded his sermon with the recommendation of *jumping*: and to allow him the praise of consistency, he got down from the chair on which he stood, and jumped along with them. The arguments he adduced for this purpose were, that David danced before the ark—that the babe *leaped* in the womb of Elizabeth—and that the man whose lameness was removed, *leaped* and praised God for the mercy which he had received. He expatiated on these topics with uncommon fervency, and then drew the inference, that *they* ought to shew *similar expressions* of joy, for the blessings which Jesus Christ had put into their possession. He then gave an impassioned sketch of the sufferings of the Saviour, and hereby roused the passions of a few around him into a state of violent agitation. About nine men and seven women, for some little time rocked to and fro, groaned aloud, and then *jumped* with a kind of frantic fury. Some of the audience flew in all directions; others gazed on in silent amazement! They all gradually dispersed, except the jumpers, who continued their exertions from eight in the evening to near eleven at night. I saw the conclusion of it: they at last kneeled down in a circle, holding each other by the hand, while one of them prayed with great fervor, and all rising up from off their knees, departed. But previous to their dispersion, they wildly pointed up towards the sky, and reminded one another, that they should soon meet *there* and be *never* again separated! I quitted the spot with astonishment. Such disorderly scenes cannot be of any service to the deluded individuals, nor prove beneficial to society. Whatever credit we may and ought to allow this class of Christians for good intentions, it is impossible to speak of the practice itself, without adopting terms of unqualified disapprobation. The reader is referred to *Bingley's* and *Evans' tour through Wales*, where (as many particulars are detailed respecting the *jumpers*) his curiosity will receive a still sur-

ther gratification. It pains the author of the present work, that he has it not in his power to give a more favourable account of them. The decline of so unbecoming a practice will, it is hoped, be soon followed by its utter extinction.



FROM THE LONDON EVANGELICAL MAGAZINE.

— * —
ON THE ADVANTAGES OF AFFLICTION TO
THE YOUNG.

It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth.
Lam. iii. 21.

THE lot of Jeremiah was cast in troublesome times. He was called of God to foretell the calamities the Jews were to be subjected to when conquered, and led into captivity by the king of Babylon. He lived to see the judgments executed which he had denounced; and was inspired by the Holy Ghost to bewail them. The Book of Lamentations exhibits Jeremiah sitting amidst the ruins of Zion; and, while his eyes ran down with water, deploring her desolations in the most melancholy strains, the spirit of cheerfulness and hope seems to have fled from his bosom. The verses of this poem are evidently the wailings of an oppressed, nay, of a broken heart. The gloomy scenes described in this book, have, perhaps, prevented it from being so frequently read as it ought to have been. As a piece of composition, it will bear to be compared with the most finished productions of elegiac poetry. It is calculated to invigorate our zeal for the civil and religious interests of our country, and to impress us with a sense of the malignant nature and ruinous tendency of sin;—it abounds too with many excellent sentiments, both of a devotional and moral cast. The sentiment on which we are now to make some remarks, is certainly an important one, and well deserves to be seriously considered. In other places of Scripture we find the benefit of affliction, to men in general, strongly stated; but this verse calls us to consider its peculiar advantages to the young. Young people have, in general, very opposite impressions of afflictions; and it may be of use to those who are in the early periods of life, to demonstrate the truth of the assertion, “That it is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth.”

1. Affliction humbles the pride of the young. To this sin they are in a peculiar manner liable. They are not tho-

roughly acquainted with the deficiencies of their own characters, and are ready to over-rate any excellence which they may possess. How ready are they to plume themselves on the graces of their bodies,—or the talents of their minds,—or their connexions with the great,—or on the prospects of wealth or influence which are opened before them!—The encomiums which are bestowed on them, when their first appearance in the world are respectable, tend greatly to cherish the spirit of pride. This disposition is hateful to God. If not checked, it will mark their conduct in life with ingratitude to him, and with insolence and oppression to men. To check this spirit, God often visits the young with afflictions. By these they have been convinced of their entire dependence on God; and that to him they owe all they have, and must look for all that they expect. When Nebuchadnezzar's heart was lifted up, and his mind hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and his glory was taken from him. He was driven from the sons of men, and his heart was made like the beasts', and his dwelling was with the wild asses. They fed him with grass, like oxen; and his body was wet with the dew of Heaven,—till he knew that the Most High ruleth in the kingdoms of men, and appointeth over them whomsoever he will. Instances might be mentioned of young men, whose conduct was marked with disgusting haughtiness and affectation, who, on the bed of sickness, and at the grave of departed friends, have learned to be meek and lowly in heart; and who can now appeal to God, and say, "O Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty; neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me!" Affliction is one of the great means which God makes use of to hide pride from man.

2. Affliction corrects the extravagant expectations of the young. Their minds are prone to form high expectations of prosperity and success in life. The fancy, at this period, is active and glowing; nor is it restrained, in its operations, by the suggestions of judgment, or by the dictates of experience. How often do they say, in their hearts, "the work of our hands shall be established!"—"our exertions in our calling shall be patronized by the noble;—our characters shall meet with praise from men;—health and peace shall perpetually reside with us in our dwellings!" In forming ideas of their path through life, they imagine it will be through flowery meadows, or over mountains of spices. They are unwilling to suppose that they shall be called to pass through the marsh or the desert. Such expectations are sinful and pernicious. They are sinful, because they are inconsistent with

the arrangements of that Providence which has ordered it, that man is born to trouble; and they are pernicious to ourselves, because, when distress comes, they give double weight to its stroke. To check such extravagant expectations in the bud, God often visits the young with trials. He says to them, by the messengers of affliction, "Seek not great things for thyself—Remember the days of darkness, for they shall be many." The disappointments and trials with which God visits the young, tend to cherish that moderation in their wishes and pursuits, which bids fair to be productive of happiness: they awaken that caution which restrains the ardour of the fancy, and bring forward the suggestions of fear to check the flatteries of hope. The young are ready to imagine, that God deals harshly with them when he afflicts them; but, in thus crushing their extravagant hopes, he is saving them the enduring of much future misery. The pangs thou feelest at present, may keep thee from after pangs far more severe, to which the indulgence of the delusive hopes of youth would have subjected thee.

3. Affliction restrains the young from sensual indulgences. To these they are often strongly solicited. Even to pious Timothy, the Apostle judged it necessary to address the exhortation, "Flee from youthful lusts." Before the young, pleasure displays all her attractions. She exhibits herself to them, decked in the gayest attire, with a countenance wearing the most enchanting smiles; and accosts them in language soft and fascinating, "Rejoice, O young, man in thy youth; and let thine heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth!" "I have decked my bed with covering of tapestry;—I have perfumed it with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon." So powerful is the influence of the allurements of pleasure over the hearts of the young, that numbers of them have followed her to their ruin. Many of them have been led by her to the commission of crimes, against which modesty, reason, and conscience lifted their voices in vain. Nothing more effectually counteracts the influence of pleasure, than the rod of sanctified afflictions: by these the young have been formed to sobriety of mind;—by these they have been led to despise the pleasures of sin, as grovelling, transitory, and destructive. What attractions will the chair of the scorner, the bed of the harlot, or the song of the drunkard, have in the eye of him who is chastened with pain, and the multitude of his bones with strong pain! Does the young man, whom God places in the house of mourning, whom he calls to minister to a dying parent, to receive his last breath, and to commit his body to the grave, does he sigh after the house of feasting, or the

assemblies of gaiety and dissipation? Were but a wish to mingle in such scenes, to start upon the bosom of an affectionate youth at a solemn period like this, he would reject it with utter abhorrence. The young who meet with trials, have reason to bless that hand which, by severe sickness, drives them from the paths of sensuality; for though they are adorned with lilies and roses, they are, in truth, the way to Hell, going down to the chambers of death. Whether think you, ye sons of youth, is it better to labour under the disease of a day; or to have the constitution broken by intemperance? Whether is it better to be stopped in the ways of sensuality; or to be allowed to run on in them till a dart strikes through your liver, and your course terminates in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone?

4. Affliction has sometimes been the means of conversion in youth. There have been many instances of young men who, like the prodigal, when reduced to want, have resolved that they would arise and go to their Father. In the season of affliction, sin is brought to remembrance; that levity of the mind is repressed, which is so unfriendly to moral seriousness, and death and the tribunal of God are brought into view. This has often led to such applications to God for mercy, as have been attended with the happiest effects. Orton, in his Sermon to the Aged, tells us of a young man who had been long confined with a diseased limb, and was near his dissolution, when, at the desire of a friend his loathsome fore was uncovered. He said, "there it is, and a precious treasure it has been to me! It saved me from the folly and vanity of youth; it made me cleave to God as my only portion, and to eternal glory as my only hope; and I think it hath now bro't me very near to my Father's house." Some young men, when they have met with disappointment in business, have been led to seek after the good part which shall never be taken from them, and to lay up treasures in Heaven;—some, when their friends have dealt treacherously with them (than which scarce any thing can give a more violent shock to the glowing feelings of youth) have been led to that Friend who rests in his love. While young persons have been taking their last leave of the corpse of a brother or a sister dearly beloved,—while they have been looking, for the last time, on their pallid countenance, and grasping, for the last time, their cold hand, have had their minds directed to Him who is not ashamed to call us Brethren; and who has said, "Whosoever shall do the will of my Father, who is in Heaven, the same is my mother, and sister, and brother."*

* Job xxxvi. 8, 9, 10.

5th. Affliction has often made the young experience the sympathy and compassion of our Lord Jesus. Christ is a friend born for adversity; and to the young of his people in affliction, he manifests peculiar kindness. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd, and gather the lambs with his arms, and carry them in his bosom. It is common with men to express peculiar concern for the young when in distress. Who can behold disease robbing their cheeks of their bloom, and wasting their beauty like a moth, without being disposed to pity! And will the Lord of compassion take no interest in their sufferings? While parents are sitting by the bedside of a distressed son, watching with unutterable anxiety every change of his features, and listening to every groan that rises from his breast, Jesus is with them, and tends the object of their solicitude with a compassion far more tender, and a care far more assiduous than theirs. His compassionate eye, sleep never closes; his ear is never shut to the complaints of his children; and his kind attentions are never unavailing. "As one whom his mother comforts, even so will I comfort you, and ye shall be comforted." How sweet, tender, and efficacious, are the comforts of a mother to a child in distress! Such is the figure employed to point out the consolations imparted by the Lord our Redeemer. The Son of man bore the yoke in his youth. In his infancy, Herod sought to murder him. For years, it is probable, he wrought as a carpenter for the support of his widowed mother. During the whole of his public ministry, he bore our griefs, and carried our sorrows; and before he was thirty-four years of age, he was crucified and slain. So heavy was that yoke which was wreathed about his neck, that it made his strength fail, and brought him to the dust of death. We have not an high priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but who was in all points tried like as we are, yet without sin. How much must this early experience of our Lord's compassion endear him to the souls of the young! and how must it encourage them in their passage through the world, to know that Christ will be a present help to them in every time of need! and that he who has been the Guide of their youth, will be the Comforter of their old age!

Lastly, Affliction invigorates the minds of the young.—The tendency of uninterrupted prosperity to enervate the mind, has been generally admitted. How seldom do we hear of a great or heroic character nursed in the lap of prosperity! But by hardships and trials, the mind is strengthened for sustaining losses the most severe, and executing schemes the

most arduous. Prosperous situations in life may be resembled to those countries where the sun shines with a scorching heat, and where nature pours all the necessaries, nay the luxuries of life, in the greatest profusion at men's feet. It is not in such climates that we are to expect to meet with characters which are distinguished for energy of mind, or enterprise in conduct. If we wish to find these, we must look for them amid the ice and snows of the north, where necessity stimulates man to spirited and laborious exertion. By disappointments and trials in youth, some have acquired such a strength of mind, that they have endured the roughest blasts of distress in after life without shrinking. Or should the man whose mind has been braced by adversity in youth be raised to opulence and grandeur in the after periods of his life, the remembrance of the hardships of his early days, will give a double relish to prosperity. Such a man will need no solicitation to stretch out his hand to relieve merit when struggling with distress, without a friend to patronize—without a comforter to soothe it. He knows the heart of the unfortunate in youth, and to them he feels himself constrained by every tie to shew kindness and respect.

Such are some of the advantages of afflictions to the young. It ought to be remembered, that they are also beneficial in the after periods of life. The cup of sorrow is mingled by a being wise and compassionate; and he never puts it into our hands, nor holds it to our lips, but when he sees it to be necessary. There is not a single drop more in it than he sees will be for our profit, to make us partakers of his holiness. The afflictions which those in the middle life meet with, are often blessed for checking their immoderate anxiety about the world, and leading them to seek first the kingdom of God, and the righteousness of it. Let not the aged question the advantages that arise to them from the infirmities of advanced life. Let them not say, "the yoke of affliction may be necessary for the stubborn neck of youth, but how can it be so for me?" Let the storm blow on the bay-trees of youth, let it shape their branches, let it strip them of their leaves, but let it not blow on the feeble almond-tree of age: It will quickly shatter it in pieces. By the infirmities of old age, God intends to awaken you to serious reflection, to detach your hearts from the world, to lead you to consider your latter end, and to make death welcome. The day will come when God shall wipe away all tears from the eyes of his saints, when he shall take the yoke from their necks, and place the crown of glory on their heads.

B.

A LETTER FROM DR. FRANKLIN TO THE REV.
MR. WHITEFIELD.

DEAR SIR,

New-York, July 2, 1756.

I RECEIVED your favor of the 24th of February, with great pleasure, as it informed me of your welfare, and expressed your continued regard for me. I thank you for the pamphlet you enclosed to me. As we had just observed a provincial fast on the same occasion, I thought it very reasonable to be published in Pennsylvania; and accordingly reprinted it immediately.

You mention your frequent wish that you were a chaplain to an American army. I sometimes wish that you and I were jointly employed by the crown to settle a colony on the Ohio. I imagine that we could do it effectually, and without putting the nation to much expence; but I fear we shall never be called upon for such a service. What a glorious thing it would be, to settle in that fine country, a large strong body of religious and industrious people! What a security to the other colonies, and advantage to Britain, by increasing her people, territory, strength, and commerce! Might it not greatly facilitate the introduction of pure religion among the Heathen, if we could, by such a colony, shew them a better sample of Christians than they commonly see in our Indian traders? The most vicious and abandoned wretches of our nation! Life, like a dramatic piece, should not only be conducted with regularity, but, methinks it should finish handsomely. Being now in the last act, I begin to cast about for something fit to end with. Or, if mine be more properly compared to an epigram, as some of its lines are but barely tolerable, I am very desirous of concluding with a bright point. In such an enterprize I could spend the remainder of life with pleasure: and I firmly believe God would bless us with success, if we undertook it with a sincere regard to his honour, the service of our gracious king and (which is the same thing) the public good.

I thank you cordially for your generous benefaction to the German schools. They go on pretty well; and will do better when Mr. Smith, who has the principal care of them, shall learn to mind party writing and party politics less, and his proper business more; which, I hope, time will bring about.

I thank you for your good wishes and prayers, and am, with the greatest esteem and affection, Dear Sir,

Your most obedient humble Servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

My best respects to Mrs. Whitfield.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE EVANGELICAL MAGAZINE,

SIR,

The following letters referring to a subject highly interesting to many of your readers, who cannot possibly have access to the elegant volumes of Mr. Hayley, I am persuaded you will, by their insertion, gratify many beside your constant reader,

T.

ON THE MUTUAL KNOWLEDGE OF SAINTS IN GLORY.

Extracted from Mr. Cowper's Letters to his Cousin, Mrs. Cowper.

LETTER I.

MY DEAR COUSIN,

AS in matters unattainable by reason, and unrevealed in the Scripture, it is impossible to argue at all—so in matters concerning which reason can only give a probable guess, and the Scripture has made no explicit discovery, it is, though not impossible to argue at all, yet impossible to argue to any certain conclusion. This seems to me to be the very case with the point in question. Reason is able to form many plausible conjectures concerning the possibility of our knowing each other in a future state; and the Scripture has here and there favoured us with an expression that looks at least like a slight intimation of it, but because a conjecture can never amount to a proof; and a slight intimation can never be construed into a positive assertion—therefore I think we can never come to any absolute conclusion upon the subject. We may indeed reason about the plausibility of our conjectures; and we may discuss, with great industry and shrewdness of argument, those passages in Scripture which seem to favor the opinion; but still, no certain means having been afforded us, no certain end can be attained; and after all that can be said, it will still be doubtful, whether we shall know each other or not.

As to arguments founded upon human reason only, it would be easy to muster up a much greater number in the affirmative side of the question, than it would be worth my while to write or yours to read. Let us see, therefore what

the Scripture says, or seems to say, towards the proof of it: and of this kind of argument also I shall insert but a few of those which seem to be the fairest and clearest for the purpose. For, after all, a disputant on either side of the question, is in danger of that censure of our blessed Lord's, *ye do err, not knowing Scriptures, nor the power of God.*

As to parables, I know it has been said, in the dispute concerning the intermediate state, that they are not argumentative; but this having been controverted by very wise and good men, and the parable of Dives and Lazarus having been used by such, to prove an intermediate state, I see not why it may not be as fairly used for the proof of any other matter, which it seems fairly to imply. In this parable we see that Dives is represented as knowing Lazarus; and Abraham as knowing them both; and the discourse between them is entirely concerning their respective characters and circumstances upon earth—Here, therefore, our Saviour seems to countenance the notion of a mutual knowledge and recollection; and if a soul that has perished shall know the soul that is saved, surely the heirs of salvation shall know and recollect each other.

In the first Epistle to Thess. 2d chapter and 19th verse, Saint Paul says, what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing! *Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming! For ye are our glory and our joy.*

As to the hope which the Apostle has formed concerning them, he himself refers the accomplishment of it to the coming of Christ; meaning, that then he should receive the recompence of his labours in their behalf! his joy and glory he refers likewise to the same period, both which would result from the sight of such numbers redeemed by the blessing of God upon his ministration, when he should present them before the Great Judge, and say, in the words of a greater than himself *Lo! I, and the children whom thou has given me.* This seems to imply that the Apostle should know the converts, and the converts the Apostle, at least at the day of Judgment; and if then, why not afterwards?

See also the 4th chapter of that Epistle, 13, 14, 16, which I have not room to transcribe. Here the Apostle comforts them under their affliction, for their deceased brethren, exhorting them *not to sorrow as without hope*; and what is the hope by which he teaches them to support their spirits? Even this, *that them which sleep in Jesus shall God bring with him.* In other words, and by a fair paraphrase surely, telling them they are only taken from them for a season; and that they should receive them at the resurrection.

a grain of mustard seed, small in itself, promising but little fruit, and producing less ! to recollect the various attempts that were made upon it, by the world, the flesh, and the Devil, and its various triumphs over all, by the assistance of God, through our Lord Jesus Christ ! At present, whatever our convictions may be of the sinfulness and corruption of our nature, we can make but a very imperfect estimate either of our weakness or our guilt. Then no doubt, we shall understand the full value of the wonderful salvation wrought out for us : and it seems reasonable to suppose, that in order to form a just idea of our redemption, we shall be able to form a just one of the danger we have escaped. When we know how weak and frail we were, surely we shall be more able to render due praise and honour to his strength who fought for us ; when we know completely the hatefulness of sin in the sight of God, and how deeply we were tainted by it, we shall know how to value the blood by which we are cleansed as we ought. The twenty-four Elders, in the 5th of the Revelations, give glory to God for their redemption, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people and nation. This surely implies a retrospect to their respective conditions upon earth ; and that each remembered out of what particular kindred and nation he had been redeemed ; and if so, then surely the minutest circumstance of their redemption did not escape their memory. They who triumph over the beast, in the 15th chapter, sing the song of Moses, the servant of God ; and what was that song ? A sublime record of Israel's deliverance, and the destruction of her enemies in the Red Sea ; typical, no doubt, of the song which the redeemed in Sion shall sing to celebrate their own salvation, and the defeat of their spiritual enemies. This again implies a recollection of the dangers they had before encountered, and the supplies of strength and ardour they had, in every emergency, received from the great Deliverer out of all. These quotations do not indeed prove that their warfare upon earth includes a part of their converse with each other, but they prove that it is a theme not unworthy to be heard, even before the throne of God ; and therefore it cannot be unfit for reciprocal communication.

But you doubt whether there is any communication between the blessed at all ; neither do I recollect any Scripture that proves it, or that bears any relation to the subject. But reason seems to require it so peremptorily, that a society without social intercourse, seems to be a solecism, and a contradiction in terms ; and the inhabitants of those regions are called, you know, in Scripture, an Innumerable *Company*, and

“Our companions in glory may probably assist us by their wise and good observations, when we come to make the providence of God, here upon earth, under the guidance and direction of our Lord Jesus Christ, the subject of our mutual converse.”

Yours,

W. COWPER.

LETTER III.

MY DEAR COUSIN,

IT is reckoned, you know, a great achievement to silence an opponent in disputation; and your silence was of so long continuance, that I might well begin to please myself with the apprehension of having accomplished so arduous a matter. To be serious, however, I am not sorry that what I have said concerning our knowledge of each other in a future state, has a little inclined you to the affirmative;—for though the redeemed of the Lord shall be sure of being as happy in that state, as infinite power, employed by infinite goodness, can make them, and therefore it may seem immaterial whether we shall, or shall not, recollect each other hereafter; yet our present happiness at least is a little interested in the question. A parent, a friend, a wife, must needs, I think, feel a little heart-ache at the thought of an eternal separation from the objects of her regard; and not to know them when she meets them in another life, or never to meet them at all, amounts, though not altogether, yet nearly to the same thing. Remember them, I think, she needs must. To hear that they are happy, will indeed be no small addition

to her own felicity ; but to see them so, will surely be a greater. Thus, at least, it appears to our present human apprehension ; consequently, therefore, to think, that when we leave them, we lose them for ever ; that we must remain eternally ignorant whether they, that were flesh of our flesh, and bone of our bone, partake with us of celestial glory, or are disinherited of their heavenly portion, must shed a dismal gloom over all our present connections. For my own part, this life is such a momentary thing, and all its interests have so shrunk in my estimation, since by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ I became attentive to the things of another, that, like a worm in the bud of all my friendships and affections, this very thought would eat out the heart of them all, had I a thousand ; and were their date to terminate with this life, I think I should have no inclination to cultivate and improve such a fugitive business. Yet friendship is necessary to our happiness here, and built upon Christian principles, upon which only it can stand, is a thing even of religious sanction—for what is that love which the Holy Spirit, speaking by St. John, so much inculcates, but friendship ? The only love which deserves the name ; a love which can toil, and watch, and deny itself, and go to death for its brother. Worldly friendships are a poor weed compared with this ; and even this union of spirit in the bond of peace, would suffer in my mind at least, could I think it were only coeval with our earthly mansions. It may possibly argue great weakness in me, in this instance, to stand so much in need of future hopes to support me in the discharge of present duty. But so it is : I am far, I know, very far from being perfect in Christian love, or any other divine attainment ; and am therefore unwilling to forego whatever may help me in my progress.

You are so kind as to enquire after my health ; for which reason I must tell you, what otherwise would not be worth mentioning, that I have lately been just enough indisposed to convince me, that not only human life in general, but mine in particular, hangs by a slender thread. I am stout enough in appearance, yet a little illness demolishes me. I have had a severe shake ; and the building is not so firm as it was. But I bless God for it with all my heart. If the inner man be but strengthened day by day, as I hope under the renewing influences of the Holy Ghost, it will be no matter how soon the outward is dissolved. He who has in a manner raised me from the dead, in a literal sense, has given me the grace, I trust, to be ready at the shortest notice, to surrender up to him that life which I have twice received from him. Whether I live or die, I desire it may be to his glory ; and it

must be to my happiness.—I thank God that I have those amongst my kindred to whom I can write without reserve of sentiments upon this subject, as I do to you. A letter upon any other subject is more insipid to me than ever my task was when a school-boy; and I say not this in vain-glory; God forbid! but to shew you what the Almighty, whose name I am unworthy to mention, has done for me, the chief of sinners. Once he was a terror to me; and his service, oh what a weariness it was! Now I can say I love him, and his holy name; and am never so happy as when I speak of his mercies to me.

Yours,

W. COWPER.

Huntingdon, Sept. 3d, 1766.

FROM THE LONDON EVANGELICAL MAGAZINE.

QUERIES AND OBSERVATIONS ON THE PER- MISSION OF SIN.

IS it to be supposed, that the first and chief Being is bound to do all he possibly can to prevent the existence of evil, both natural and moral?

If so,—then, since evil does exist, we must suppose, either that he was not almighty, or not infinitely wise, and so could not have prevented its existence; or else that, through a defect of goodness, he forbore to exert himself to prevent its existence, when he was well able to have hindered it from taking place.

Yea, if it be supposed that the Supreme Being is absolutely bound to prevent the existence of moral evil, then (unless we admit that it may have taken place altogether against his will) there can be no such thing as moral government: for, by the supposition, no being can be under law but the Supreme Being; forasmuch as, it is supposed, that, if any being does amiss, it must be his fault to let him do it.

But, if the Supreme Being be not bound to prevent the existence of evil, then surely it is infinitely better for him to regulate, and set exact limits to the whole business, than for it to be under no controul, or to be under the controul of inferior beings.

Let me appeal to any intelligent being who has the least confidence in the wisdom and goodness of the Most High,—Since you find evil does exist, what supposition would afford you the most satisfaction?

That it exists altogether against the will of God, through his not having power or wisdom sufficient to prevent it? And that, now it does exist, he can only do his best to check and restrain, and at length to conquer it; in which he will, it is hoped, succeed at last?

Or, that it exists by his wise permission, and under his absolute controul; and will, contrary to its own natural tendency, and to the intention and design of all sinners, eventually be made subservient to the divine glory in all things?

If it be no blemish in the divine character to permit sin, then it was no blemish in the divine character to purpose or intend to permit it.* If all that God does is right, it could not be wrong to resolve to do so; God could not intend doing well too soon.

If God does permit sin, and decreed to permit it, no doubt he had wise and good ends in so doing: and as he has wonderfully united his interest, not only with the interest of his obedient creatures, who never fell, but also with the interest of the redeemed from among men,—we may conclude, that the plan which he has actually chosen to adopt, shall not only promote his own glory more than any other which could possibly have been chosen,—but shall also, on the whole, promote creature happiness more than any other supposable method of regulating the universe.

Some, however, seem strangely shocked at this! as if they could be better satisfied if we would admit that God had chosen a worse plan than he might have chosen, than they can be with our supposing that he has chosen the best! Their feelings are to me incomprehensible.

God has chosen to conduct the universe according to the plan which actually is executing.—This they admit.

The plan God has adopted is the wisest and the best: it will advance his glory more than any other: it will produce a greater sum of happiness than any other.—At this they marvel, and are shocked!

I also marvel at them! and can go no farther.

C. W.

* See Edwards's Remarks on Important Theological Controversies, p. 147.

For the Virginia Religious Magazine.

ON THE FORGIVENESS OF INJURIES.

THE forgiveness of injuries, taken in its genuine import, is a doctrine peculiar to divine revelation. It is true some of the heathen philosophers, who lived before the coming of our Saviour, had mentioned this doctrine; but they enforced it by considerations, which were likely to do more harm, than the doctrine itself could ever do good. The plan adopted by those philosophers, was, that all human actions were necessary; that when the wicked and malicious did us an injury, they could not avoid it; and of course, that they were more to be pitied than blamed. Could a man bring himself to believe this statement of the matter, it might indeed take off something from the edge of his resentment: but then the statement itself, destroys every idea of human accountability, and of a future retribution; it takes away all support from virtue and piety, and relieves guilt from all its terrors. Those men who thus taught a single moral duty, at the expence of all morality, were not great benefactors of mankind.

In the New Testament we shall find more correct information on this subject. That book inculcates the doctrines of human accountability, and of the just and righteous government of God, in the most impressive manner, and yet exhibits sufficient reasons for requiring us to forgive our enemies, and to 'overcome evil with good.' The few ideas which I mean to suggest on this subject, shall be put down in the following order—first, I shall shew what is implied in the forgiveness of injuries—secondly, I shall attempt to enforce the duty by a few arguments.

To forgive an injury implies, that we retain no secret malice against the person who had offended us; that if we had him completely in our power we would not punish him merely for the gratification of our resentment; and that we would not bring misfortunes upon him, could we even do it by a secret wish, and without ever being known or even suspected as the cause of those misfortunes. This short definition perhaps, if duly attended to, might convict some persons not aware of their error, that they are living in the violation of a duty most solemnly enjoined by the Great Head of the church. Some people settle their contentions, because it is always awkward and embarrassing to meet a professed enemy in company; sometimes we bridle our passions, because afraid to

cope with our antagonists ; and sometimes we forego the gratification of revenge, because we cannot indulge it without discovering a temper which would injure our reputations. In all this there is nothing of the evangelical spirit—the wisdom that cometh from above, is first pure, then peaceable, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits.

Perhaps it may throw light upon this subject, to notice some things which are not connected with the duty under consideration. Christian forgiveness does not imply any littleness or pusillanimity of mind. A man may feel that he is injured ; he may form a proper estimate of the unprincipled conduct of his adversary ; he may not want either courage or prowess to punish the insult ; and yet he may think it more noble to forgive, than to punish. Revenge is not often noble. That revenge which leads to immediate bloodshed, and which must be followed by years of contrition and remorse, forms no part of a great character ; and as to that slow malice which sometimes wears the mask of friendship ; which always waits to stab in secret ; and which carries on its measures by clandestine falsehoods and misrepresentations, I know of no language sufficient to express its baseness. Upon the whole, the forgiving temper seems to lead to the most honorable methods of settling a dispute.

Christian forgiveness does not require a man to relinquish his rights. It may appear to some, at the first view, that our Saviour contradicts this position in the sermon on the mount. “Ye have heard that it hath been said, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a toothe ; but I say unto you, that ye resist not evil, but whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also, and if any man will sue thee at the law and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also ; and whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.” But when due allowance is made for the figurative and proverbial expressions in this passage, it will appear that our Saviour only meant to inculcate great forbearance and moderation in little matters. All the incidents he has mentioned, are of the trivial kind ; and where the injury is of slight consequence, it is much better to overlook, than to punish it. This remark deserves the more attention, as almost all the serious quarrels in the world, may be traced back to very small beginnings. Some peccadillo produced the first coldness ; coldness prevented explanation, and retaliated the offence ; and hence the accumulation of mutual provocations and mutual wrongs, till resentment bursting over all bounds, vented itself in the most serious consequences. And how easily might those consequences have been prevented by an adherence to our Saviour’s max-

ims in the first instance. But to suppose that these maxims required the relinquishment of important rights, would contradict other parts of the sacred volume. The Apostle Paul frequently asserted and maintained his privileges as a Roman citizen, and our Saviour himself, when he armed his disciples, taught them the propriety of self-defence when any important injury was meditated against them. But then the principle of self defence, or of repelling force by force, should only be carried so far as our own safety, or the public good requires. When these ends are accomplished, it is time to assume a peaceful attitude, and leave the door open for reconciliation.

Christian forgiveness does not require, that we should imprudently expose ourselves to the stratagems of artful and malicious men. However the maxim may be abused, it is nevertheless true, that there is a wide difference between forgiving and forgetting an injury. If a man has proven to you that he is not to be trusted, you may forgive him, but why should you trust him again?—if he be evidently meditating your ruin, why should you not keep him at a distance, and take measures for your own safety? But I will just remark upon this head, that when you have really forgiven an injury, and only remember it for your own future security, you will act and feel towards an enemy, just as you would have done, had you learned his character by observing his conduct towards others, without having felt its influence yourself.

Christian forgiveness does not require us to be zealous in advancing the interests, or increasing the power of a bad man, whether he had been personally our enemy or not. The influence of a bad man is frequently a public misfortune: and when I see a person who treats religion with contempt; sets the authority of his Maker at defiance; and by his example draws multitudes into the way of ruin, is there any thing in the Bible, requiring that I should make myself subservient to his purposes?—Or, when the hand of a righteous Providence was stretched forth to strip this man of his power, would it be irreligious on my part, to rejoice in an event by which the kingdom of darkness was weakened? The Saints in the Revelation are, more than once, represented as rejoicing in the destruction of the wicked; and it is thought by some commentators, that many passages in the Psalms, where David curses his enemies, and prays for their ruin, ought to be understood as proceeding from a regard to the general good of the Church. But this leads us upon delicate ground: examples of this kind are liable to great abuse, and ought never to be quoted without much caution. A zeal for the glory of God and the good of the Church, has been made the pre-

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text, not only for a great deal of ill nature and merosity, but for innumerable persecutions: Let it therefore be remembered, that the imprecations of David are not examples for our imitation, and could not have been justified, even in him, had he not foreseen, by a prophetic spirit, that the characters against whom they were vented, would never be reclaimed, but would continue to harass the Church, until disabled by the fulfilment of those imprecations. Let it also be remembered, that we are to rejoice in the fall of a bad man, not because he is destroyed, but because he is divested of the power of destroying others. Let me suppose a personage invested with all the power, which birth, and wealth, and misapplied talents, can give him: he takes his stand by the narrow way that leads to *life*, and annoys every Pilgrim who is travelling the road to Zion—he discourages many, and keeps many back from the way of righteousness—At last the justice of Heaven speaks, and the proud oppressor is no more! You rejoice—not because he is ruined, but because the snares are broken which he had spread for the ruin of others. But we may sometimes rejoice at the fall of a bad man, when it would not be lawful to desire, much less to hasten it. Whilst there is life there is hope. The counsels of Heaven are unsearchable, and who knows but the persecuting infidel may become a child of grace. This event Divine Providence is able to accomplish, and it would be extremely grateful to every Christian. Upon the whole, our Saviour affords us the safest test of real Christian forgiveness: “Pray for those who despitefully use you and persecute you.” Use this test, and you will not err; for, although you may constrain yourself to do an act of external kindness to an enemy, you have no malice against that man for whom you can sincerely pray. The frequent use of this test I would earnestly recommend to every reader; when you lie down at night, or rise in the morning, think of your acquaintance, and particularly of those with whom your interests have clashed. Can you sincerely recommend them to the tender mercies of God? If you can, you may then venture to pray for yourself; but if not you *regard iniquity in your heart, and the Lord will not hear you*. How can you ask forgiveness for ten thousands talents, if you will not forgive your brother one hundred pence? These observations must suffice for the first part of the subject—we shall now proceed to enforce the duty under consideration by a few arguments.

1. And in the first place, the forgiveness of injuries is calculated to promote our own peace of mind. Revenge is a painful passion, even when most successful in its gratification,

but when disappointed it becomes excessively tormenting. Jealousy has been by way of eminence called the "injured lover's Hell!" It may be the most furious and distracting of all the passions; but for my part, if I wished to paint a man as completely miserable, I would represent him as filled with malice and revenge, whilst his enemy could hold him at defiance; circumvent him in every position; and frustrate all his purposes.—Unsuccessful malice against that Almighty Being, who defeats all their schemes, and holds them in everlasting chains, is supposed to constitute a principal part of the misery of the damned in Hell. Malice on earth, is not so tormenting, because it probably does not rage with equal fury, and is not so uniformly baffled; and yet, even here, a vindictive spirit is among the bitterest portions which can fall to any man's lot.

2. A forgiving temper is the best means of securing peace with the world. Bad as the world is, it frequently pays respect to virtue, and when it sees a peaceable, upright and useful man, bearing with patience, and yet with dignity the wrongs of the malignant and the foolish; it will be very likely to take part with him against his enemies, even the enemies of such a man will frequently relent. A German clergyman once said he could make the worst of men a good neighbour, when asked how he would do it, he replied, "if he does me an injury I will take no notice of it at the time, but embrace the first opportunity of doing him a kindness. This experiment," said he, "I have often had occasion to make, and it never failed. Now, dismissing false pride, and consulting only reason; let me ask, whether this conduct is not more conducive to peace of mind, and soundness of conscience; whether it is not even more dignified and noble, and better calculated to conciliate the esteem of all wise men, than if he had shed his neighbour's blood in a duel. You may perhaps think, that this example is only fit for a clergyman to imitate; but let me tell you, that it illustrates a maxim which the Apostle inculcates upon all: if thine enemy hunger feed him, if he thirst give him drink; for in so doing, thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head. What a pity it is, that the experiments which this maxim of the Apostle points, was not oftener tried; and how much does the present state of the world call for it? The human family by the righteous judgment of Heaven, have become the children of affliction? We inhabit a land, condemned to bring forth briers and thorns? *We are dust, and unto dust we shall return.* From the appointed order of things, or rather from the just displeasure of God, we derive trouble, and sorrow, and labor, and bereave-

ment, and disappointment enough. But when man forgetting to do good and to relieve the wants of his brethren, sets himself to work mischief; when his mouth becomes full of cursing and bitterness, and his feet are swift to shed blood; then it is that the condition of our nature becomes truly deplorable. These evils can be corrected, only by attending to the wise precepts of the Gospel, and learning to forgive one another; some may apprehend that the world is too degenerate to be so much affected by the proper exercise of christian forgiveness, as these observations seem to suppose; but I believe they are mistaken—an unrespected kindness, and especially when it comes from one who had been treated as an enemy, will make some impression on the worst of men.

3. Another argument in favor of a forgiving temper, is that we have much to be forgiven ourselves; at this I glanced before, but it deserves more particular attention. This argument is stated with great force by our Saviour in the parable of the servant, who had been forgiven ten thousand talents; but who immediately afterwards went out, caught his fellow-servant by the throat, and threw him into prison, because he could not pay him an hundred pence. In reading this parable, we are somewhat relieved by the thought, that it is a parable; for we could hardly bear to think, that such an instance of cruelty should ever exist in real life; but it is only a feeble representation of the baseness of his conduct, who expects to go to Heaven by an act of grace, and refuses to forgive his fellow-creatures their trespasses against him.

4. Another argument in favor of christian forgiveness, is, that the wickedness of the wicked returns with ten-fold weight upon their own heads, and eventually hurts none but themselves. Have the wicked misrepresented the improprieties or defects of your character? Well, although their conduct in that case be inexcusable, you may derive lessons of wisdom from it. It is true they have given you an aggravated picture of yourself, but the very aggravation of your foibles will make you think the more about them, and rectify them the sooner. A friend would have touched the wound too slightly to be felt. An enemy is often our best reprover, and however bad his motives, we ought to forgive that enemy when the advantage is all our own. But do your enemies assault you without any cause or provocation? Then you have no cause either of alarm or anger. A sound character is not easily hurt; truth will perhaps prevail at last. But above all, your Heavenly Father has engaged, that all things shall work together for your good. But remember, the wicked man is the worst enemy to himself, and his day is coming. When the

Psalmist went to the sanctuary of God, then he understood the end of the wicked. "Surely thou didst set them in slippery places, thou calledst them down into destruction—as a dream when one awaketh, so O Lord, when thou awakest thou shalt despise their image." Now suppose, you saw a blind man standing on a slippery place at the verge of a precipice, where no bottom had ever been found; the malicious wretch was wantonly attempting to injure every passenger; but you saw that his feet would soon slide, and he should fall, whence he would never arise—Would you think him an object of relentment or of pity? This gives but a faint representation of the folly and wretchedness of the wicked, whilst they are persecuting the righteous.

The foregoing remarks are intended to shew to Christians, the propriety of forgiving the enemies of religion whatever injuries may be sustained from them; but if contentions should arise between those who profess, and wish to promote the same religion; the greater part of these arguments would apply to their case also, and many more might be added. Let such characters reflect, that they expect to live together in Heaven; there must be no animosity there—and why should they fall out by the way? Let them also reflect, how deep a wound their conduct may inflict on the cause of religion? Their contention may harden the profane, and prove a stumbling block to multitudes. Considerations of this kind deserve the attention of Christians of different denominations, as well as of different members in the same societies. C.

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For the Virginia Religious Magazine.

ON THE EXISTENCE OF DEITY.

THE most obvious argument for the existence of God, is drawn from the works of creation. If the material world is an effect, it must have a cause—If it discovers marks of design it must have an intelligent cause.

In opposition to this argument, appear the doctrines of Aristotle and Epicurus—The former, holding the world to be eternal—the latter, that it was produced by chance.

The Aristotelians tell us, that something must have existed from eternity; and if something, why not all things—They say, it is as easy to suppose the eternal existence of matter, as the eternal existence of mind.

The eternity of the world is a doctrine, that in its own nature never can be deduced from reason, nor ascertained

from history—There is no natural necessity for the eternity of matter ; and if it is eternal, there is no possibility of an eternal history or tradition.

But on the other hand, both reason and tradition may come in as witnesses against the eternity of the world.

1. The first argument for the creation of the world, may be drawn from the general belief of mankind, and the tradition of nations ; that the world had a beginning, was held by the Magi of Persia—the Brachmins of India—the Gymnosophists of Egypt—generally by the philosophers of Greece and Rome—and is confirmed by revelation, in the Mosaic account of the creation.

Here we may remark on this head, that mankind do not generally unite in assenting to any doctrine, without something to produce this assent ; this would be supposing an effect without a cause.

2. The present form of the world, notwithstanding the continual deflection of the particles of matter, would be a sufficient argument for the creation of the world were there no equivalent circulation ; and were it certain that the world never suffered any transformation.—As to the circulation or reflux of particles, it may be observed, that there is no established law of nature for it ; and, that as it opposes the law of gravitation, which is uniform, it must in less than an eternity be overcome. If matter be eternal, its laws and properties must be eternal.—Now it would be absurd to suppose an eternal tendency of the particles of matter to sphericity without acquiring it.

Moreover, to say that the world must have been transformed, so as to account for its present appearances ; is making a supposition which is never an argument.

3. When we consider the solar system, how complicated and irregular ; and especially when we consider that there is not an exact balance in the opposite powers which produce the revolutions of the planets, particularly of the moon ; it must appear evident, that this system cannot be eternal.

4. If we consider the vast quantity of particles of light which flow from the sun, we must confess that this emanation could not be eternal, and consequently that the sun could not be eternal ; or we must deny the materiality of these particles—Any theory for supplying the sun with fuel or substance, is mere hypothesis, and cannot therefore be of any weight.

5. If the world be eternal, it must exist through necessity, but there is no necessity for the existence of matter.

There is no necessity for the present existence of the world,

because we can suppose its non existence.—It might now be struck out of existence without any contradiction—There is no physical necessity for the present structure of the universe, nor for the cohesion of the particles of matter; because the present form of the universe, as well as the union of material things, may cease without any violation of the laws of matter—There is no quality in matter which implies necessary existence; if there is, it would be well for the eternalists to tell us what it is! It is not mobility, divisibility, nor solidity, for these qualities imply no necessity.

6. If then the idea of mere matter does not imply necessary existence—much less does matter which bears the marks of design—Design is not attached to the idea of necessary existence.—Any thing which bears so many marks of final causes as the world, must have an intelligent cause.

7. It is easy to prove that the present race of men are not eternal.—History informs us of a period when arts and sciences were in their infancy—And it is evident, that greater advances have been made for the last 3000 years, than ever were made before.

If man existed from eternity, how did it come that his powers only began to unfold so lately.

We cannot easily solve this difficulty, without supposing the human race to have slept several thousand years; and by that means to have forgotten all their former knowledge.—But there are no human productions extant, no works of art, no systems of science—No monumental inscriptions to mark the great antiquity of the human race.

But if it is absurd to suppose the world eternal, it is much more absurd to suppose it produced by chance.

1. Chance is nothing; and to say that nothing could produce a world, is to say that an effect can be produced without a cause.

Some, however, account for the existence of the world upon mechanical principles, and the agency of natural laws.—But this hypothesis takes for granted two things which cannot be proved, to wit: that matter existed from eternity, and that the laws of matter in its present state belonged to it in its atomic state.

As to the first position it is without proof, and most of the arguments against the eternal existence of the world, will operate against the eternal existence of matter.—But supposing them to have existed, they must have been either in a state of motion or rest. If in a state of rest, they must have required something to put them into motion; some extrinsic power—If they existed in a state of uniform motion, (and an eternal irre-

gular motion would be inconceivable) there must have been some extra power to have changed that motion.

But the absurdities of the Epicurian system are as numerous as the atoms which form their world.

The best argument against this scheme, is drawn from the order, the harmony, and marks of design, which appear in creation. *Chance* can never produce order, nor regularity. A Painter may, by art and design, delineate the various members of a horse—but we never heard of a drop of paint falling on paper, and by *chance* producing the picture of a horse, with his limbs, mane, ears, tail, and all in their proper places, and in due proportions.

I remember to have read of a ship's company being cast on one of the southern islands, of which they knew nothing previous to their landing, upon discovering a mathematical figure drawn on the sand, they immediately concluded that the island was inhabited.

We naturally infer, not only the existence of the cause from the effect, but also the character of the cause. When we see a book containing demonstrations of mathematical propositions, we conclude at once, that the author was a mathematician. A watch gives us the idea of a mechanic, and supposes art and design; nor did any one ever dream of such a machine being produced by *chance*. But man is a more complicated machine than a watch; he contains more springs of action, and would be infinitely harder to organize. But if chance, aided by the laws nature, ever produced an *animal*, why did she never produce a *watch* or a *clock*, which are so much less complex.

Some modern writers have endeavored to account for the existence of the world upon principles similar to those of Epicurus.

They say, the whole of chaos, consisting of elastic particles, exploded at once, and dispersed it's atoms through infinite space in every direction, when the sudden attraction of phlogistic particles, in almost an instant, formed an infinity of suns.—This sudden concatenation brought together a multitude of heterogeneous particles, which becoming rarified, caused sun quakes or explosions, by which large bodies of matter, that is to say, the primary planets, were thrown out, and by means of greater friction on one side than the other, as they fled from the sun, they acquired the diurnal motion—and being then in a fluid state, they soon acquired a spherical form.

These huge masses as they became cool exploded, and threw out their moons, and the attendant vapours becoming condensed, retired into the fissures and formed the oceans.

Doctor Darwin has expressed this theory in a few lines, and of deed it makes a better figure in a poem, than in a system and in philosophy:

"Astonish'd chaos heard the potent word—
 "Thro' all his realms the kindling ether runs,
 "And the mass starts into a million Suns.—
 "Earths round each Sun, with quick explosion burst,
 "And second planets issue from the first—
 "—Then rose the continent, and sunk the main,
 "And Earth's huge sphere exploding burst in twain.
 "While from it's vapourous air condens'd by cold,
 "Descending torrents into Oceans roll'd." &c. &c.

But this system, if it involved no other absurdity, yet it never will account for the projectile motion of the planets.—Centrifugal and centripetal directions may be accounted for, by the known laws of matter—expulsion might drive a planet off, and attraction bring it back again—but by what combination of forces, or by what law of matter, can a body be forced out of the line both of attraction and expulsion, without any new power applied?

In all these theories then is wanting some spring of action, some *primum mobile*, to set the whole in motion—Great pains have been taken by some Philosophers to supersede the necessity of Divine Agency, but we will find, by examining their systems, even by human reason, that in the literal sense of the word, it is *the fool who has said in his heart, there is no God.*

Erratum—Page 229. for 'matter' read 'atoms.'

For the Virginia Religious Magazine.

RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCE.

Extract of a letter from a Missionary to his friend in Rockbridge county.

REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,

HAVING now performed my tour through the western part of Virginia, I shall give you my views of the state of Religion in that part of the state. The revival which commenced in Bath county, on the waters of Greenbrier river, about the first of the year 1804, has excited general attention, and a particular account of the origin and progress of it, will no doubt, be agreeable to you.

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In a settlement called the Head of Greenbrier, forty miles above the Little-Levels. There are a few characters who engaged in religion some years since, during a former revival in Virginia; as is usually the case, where the means of grace are not dispensed; they grew cold in religion, and the divine spark was almost smothered by worldly cares. Near the close of the year 1803, some of them hearing of revivals in various parts of the world, became very solicitous that God would do something for them and their neighbours, who were living ignorant of God, and careless about their immortal souls—Accordingly some of them, proposed that they should appoint social meetings, for prayer, singing, and reading such religious tracts as they might think useful. But difficulties and objections were still thrown in the way, which prevented society from being introduced, till New-Year's day, 1804. At the first meeting, serious attention and solemn engagedness were discovered in almost every one. The hearts of God's people were deeply affected with a lively hope that he was about to do something for them in their destitute state. These meetings were well attended. Numbers began seriously to enquire, what they should do to be saved?—While some were brought to praise God for his mercy, in visiting them in their destitute situation, and bringing their souls from a state of nature, to a state of grace.

In the Little-Levels, about the 20th of March, the revival began there in the family of ——— It appears that the Divine Being had previously prepared him for the event.—Some months before, he felt great engagedness in religion; and a strong belief that God would visit his neighborhood, although destitute of the public means of grace.

One evening, having collected his family for the purpose of worship, they began to sing some Hymns—At the close of one he sunk down in his chair, under a deep sense of divine things. Shortly after four of his family fell, on which occasion their minds were much affected—Some praying that God would have mercy on them, while others lamenting in bitterness of soul, their lost and undone state by nature and practice.

Under these circumstances they thought proper to call in their neighbours, some of whom were affected; at that time, in the same way both in body and mind. Thus the revival of religion began, which has spread and prevailed till this time.

Various bodily agitations have accompanied this work, such as falling, leaping, jerking, &c.—But the people, as far as I had the opportunity of conversing with them, put

no dependence in them as evidences of religion.—It may be, and probably is the case, that some esteem them more highly than they ought. But this will not appear strange when we attend to their situation, previous to the present out-pouring of the spirit among them. They considered themselves as brought up in almost total ignorance of the Gospel—The Sabbath was spent in wickedness, or idle amusement, instead of religious duties. The expressions of many who are subjects of the bodily exercise, manifested that the spirit of God is at work on their hearts. It is very common to hear sinners lamenting with bitterness their violations of God's laws, and the neglect of their soul's salvation.—Those who have received the comforts of Christians, shew by their conduct and expressions, the gratitude of heart they feel towards God, for shewing mercy to them through a Saviour.

The change that has taken place generally where this work has prevailed, is very pleasing;—formerly, when they collected together, drinking, swearing, horse-racing, fighting and such like practices, were common among them—But now, as I am told, you will seldom see one pursuing any of these practices. Those who make no pretensions to religion, still appear under great restraint.

The bodily exercise, which has lately accompanied revivals in the Western and Southern states, has much perplexed the pious Christian, and speculative philosopher. I shall not pretend to say any thing about the outward appearance—One thing I believe there is sometimes connected with these bodily exercises, a heart work begun and carried on; for which many will have cause to bless God throughout eternity. As Christians we ought to rejoice in this, and pray the King of Zion that he would still *ride forth conquering and to conquer.*

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FROM THE LONDON EVANGELICAL MAGAZINE.

MEMOIR OF THE LATE REV. J. BROWN OF HADDINGTON.

WE love an author, from whose works our minds have derived pleasure and improvement: we wish to be introduced to intimate acquaintance with him, that we may see him in the undress of life, and mark the genuine dispositions of his heart. To gratify a desire so reasonable, is certainly proper.

In the present case, it appears to be, in some degree, necessary; for the self-denial which distinguishes all Mr. B's writings,—the narrative which he hath given of himself, published in his *Select Remains*.—and the strong terms in which he utters the deep sense he cherished of his sinfulness, especially when dying, seemed to throw a veil over his real character, and conceal his spiritual excellencies. The truth of the following account, in which some particulars will appear singular, it is believed, will readily be admitted by all his brethren in the ministry, who were in habits of intimacy with him during his life, and now survive him in the vineyard of the Lord.

In learning, his attainments were eminent: they corresponded with the insatiable ardour of his young mind after general knowledge. His acquaintance with European languages will astonish our minds, when we consider, that, excepting the space of one single month, he was his own teacher. He relished the beauties of the Latin poets; but of the Greek, and especially of the Hebrew language, his knowledge was extensive, accurate, and critical. He could read and translate the French, the Italian, the German, the Arabic, the Persian, the Syriac, and the Ethiopic. Though he understood the Newtonian system, and was not unacquainted with the different theories of the human mind, connected with the science of morals, his favourite study was Divinity; and in subserviency to this, the history of nations, and of the church of God. He made an abridgement of the whole of the Ancient Universal History. In Divinity, he perused chiefly the writings of the best old divines, as Turretine, Piclet, Mastricht, Owen—and of the moderns, Boston, Erskine, Hervey. But, above all, he studied the oracles of God. Indeed, his acquaintance with the Bible was singular. Sceldom was a text quoted, but he could accurately repeat it explain its meaning, and state its connexion.

In piety, he was eminently heavenly minded: prayer was his delight. Besides the regular devotions of the closet, he appeared often engaged in ejaculations to his Father in Heaven; particularly, when he was composing or meditating on his sermons. He frequently set apart a morning for extraordinary prayer, and often called together his domestics to family fasting, or thanksgiving. Though few more tenderly sympathized with the afflicted, yet he was scarce ever seen to weep, except from the deep impressions of divine truth on his own heart, or from compassion for perishing souls. Bodily pain, and the death of relations, he endured without shedding a tear; but when

he was warning sinners of their danger, and beseeching them to be reconciled unto God, the emotions of his heart generally overcame his firmness, and frequently checked his utterance.

He was a conscientious observer of the Lord's Day. To converse on the common affairs of life, or even on the mere externals and trivial matters of the church, he considered as unsuitable to the spiritual exercises of the day, and offensive to God. As he would not allow himself to say or do what he conceived to be inconsistent with the sanctification of that holy day, so he endeavoured to restrain all within his house from such practices.

In conversation, it was evident to every body, that his constant aim was to reform, and to edify. He seldom gave an opinion on political subjects, or at all intermeddled with them. The remarks which he made, when others introduced subjects of that nature, were usually religious. Instead of expressing approbation, or of passing censure on the conduct of our rulers, he tried to lead the attention to the operations of Providence, which manages all things for the honor of God, and the welfare of his church. The subject of ministers' stipends he also studiously avoided in conversation; knowing that they who officiate in sacred things, lie too frequently, however undeservedly, under the odium of being mercenary men; and that few things tend more to hinder the people's edification, than a suspicion that their minister's leading object is worldly gain. The proceedings of the ecclesiastical courts, he seldom spake of to private Christians; and the imprudent behaviour of any of their members, he carefully concealed. He could not see how the mentioning of these things could any way promote the real spiritual profit of his people.

Through steadfast faith in the divine promises, he seems to have attained to an habitual evenness of mind, so as never to be much transported with joy, or much depressed with sorrow. In him the promise was evidently fulfilled; *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee.* On one occasion, hearing a most tremendous peal of thunder, he said, with much pleasant serenity, "That's the love-whisper of my God."

For some years before his death he took peculiar delight in reading and abridging the Lives and Experiences of serious Christians.

During his last illness he discovered a remarkable thankful frame of mind for the smallest favour or assistance given

to him ; and so entirely satisfied was he with the dispensations of Providence, that for three or four months before he died, he was never heard to utter a peevish word.

In diligence he was unwearied. In summer, he rose between four and five in the morning ; in winter, at six ; and prosecuted his studies till eight in the evening. The hours which thousands waste in sleep, he busily employed in prayer, in reading, or writing. Formal visits he disrelished ; and often said he would much rather compose a sermon, than spend an hour in these. His people knew his disposition ; and seldom invited him out, or called on him, without some errand of importance. The number of his publications is a proof of his diligence ; especially as he was accustomed to write his manuscripts several times over, and never employed an *amanuensis* : nor were his ministerial labours ever relaxed. Besides expounding a part of Scripture, he preached three sermons every Lords' Day, excepting a short while, in the depth of winter. During the months, when, as Professor of Divinity under the associate Synod, he was engaged in teaching the students, and his pulpit was supplied by his brethren, he frequently went a considerable number of miles, and preached to a congregation for whom no sermon had been provided. He visited, ministerially, every family of his church once a year, and twice a year catechised them ; besides his frequent instructions, often weekly, given to the children.

In charity he was exemplary. His income was indeed small ; but with what he had, it was his aim to do good to all, especially to the household of faith. It was his opinion, that every man is bound to devote at least the tenth part of his income to pious uses ; and, though he had a numerous family, he often exceeded this proportion. He exercised a degree of economy in expences on his own person, which some of his brethren thought to be extreme. It appeared clearly, however, that his sole object in this frugality of expenditure on himself, was, that he might be the more enabled to give to him that needed. His alms were frequently accompanied with good counsels, that while the body was supplied, the salvation of the soul might not be neglected. To poor congregations, who requested a collection from his people, rather than burthen them (being small in number, and generally poor) he several times sent considerable sums out of his own pocket. Frequently did he make the widow's heart to sing for joy ; while the stream ran in a channel so concealed, that the spring was never discovered, save by the family whose withered garden was refreshed by its waters.

As a minister, he was a faithful and humble servant of our Lord Jesus Christ. He possessed a peculiar talent in preaching discourses which tended to awaken the conscience and search the heart. But his greatest pleasure was to publish the glad tidings of salvation, and the free access which sinners, even the chief, have to the Saviour. His urgent reasonings with sinners, on God's behalf, will not soon be forgotten by those who heard them. He possessed a happy turn of mind in choosing subjects of sermons that suited the special occurrences of Providence towards the nation in general, or the circumstances of his own congregation in particular. Though his learning was very considerable, he never made a shew of it in the pulpit. His object was not to exalt himself, but that Saviour whom God delighteth to honour; and to bring down, as far as possible, the great truths of religion to the level of common capacities. He often repeated Archbishop Usher's saying—"It will take all our learning to make things plain." Great was his boldness and fidelity in addressing immortal souls. A respectable English divine, who about thirty years ago heard him for some time in his own meeting-house, says, "I well remember a searching sermon he preached from these words, *What went ye out for to see, &c.*—Although at that time I had no experimental acquaintance with the truth as it is in Jesus, yet his grave appearance in the pulpit, his solemn, weighty, and energetic way of speaking, used to affect me very much. Certainly his preaching was close, and his address to the conscience pungent. Like his Lord and Master, he spake with authority and hallowed pathos, having himself tasted the sweetness, and felt the power of what he delivered." If the style of his printed sermons should not please the more polished reader, his own congregation will attest, that such was the earnest manner of his delivery, as to make it scarcely possible to hear him, and not be deeply and seriously affected. Avowed infidels have sometimes been struck with this, and though they laughed at others,—when they heard him, were forced to listen with gravity and deep attention. He was never backward to preach, if sinners were willing to hear. Instead of reckoning it a burden, he accounted it a grace given to him to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ. It was his usual practice, both before and after he came from public worship, to retire to his closet and pour out his heart in prayer. Trifling conversation at any time, but especially after being engaged in the solemnities of Christian worship, he peculiarly detested. In visiting the sick, he was very industrious. His visits were never tedious; but, according to his oppor-

tunity, frequent. When any of his people were in affliction, he visited them immediately, if possible, on being informed: nor was he backward to shew sympathy to those of other denominations, when told that his visit would be acceptable. His public prayers were commonly short, except on days of fasting and thanksgiving; and then he prayed with such fervour and importunity, as had a remarkable tendency to elevate the devotions of his fellow worshippers.

None more earnestly wished the spreading of the blessed Gospel. He gladly undertook many long and severe journeys to congregations destitute of pastors, where he might have access, to preach the glad tidings of salvation. He greatly rejoiced in the success of Brainerd, and other Missionaries; and often in preaching, when his subject would admit, descanted with much pleasure on Missions to the Hea-then world. Of this he was peculiarly fond, a few years before his death. Meetings for prayer and religious conversation, he laboured to encourage, not merely by recommending them from the pulpit, but by frequently attending them himself. Those in the town, he visited, if possible, once a week; those in the country, as often as he had opportunity. Persons weak in knowledge, who attended them, he kindly encouraged, by shewing respect to such remarks as they made on divine truths.

Early religion he warmly pressed. Sometimes he preached a sermon, or a course of sermons, to the young, and, in the application of his other discourses, he frequently introduced an exhortation to them. He often catechised them, either in the schools, or in the meeting-houses; and seldom met with young persons but he introduced some observations respecting the misery of their natural state, and the method of recovery by the Redeemer. Several of these hints seem to have had a good effect. For some years, a meeting of seven or eight children was held in his manse,* for prayer, praise, and spiritual conference: and though it was commonly on Saturday evenings, he frequently left his studies for half an hour, went into the little religious society, conversed familiarly with them, and, after giving them good counsels, recommended them to God, in prayer, while the dear young ones were kneeling around.

He met with trials from the irregular behaviour of some few members of his church; but when any fell into open and

* *The Parsonage-house.*

heinous transgressions, it grieved his spirit so much, as not unfrequently to deprive him of his night's rest. When he understood that differences existed between members of the church, he made it his business to have them speedily removed; and was particularly active this way, especially in view of the dispensation of the Lord's Supper.

His success in the ministry was very considerable. In his own congregation, it is hoped, that a number claimed him for their spiritual father; and that others acknowledged him to be the helper of their faith and joy. Nor was it at home only that he was instrumental in doing good to souls; in various parts of the country where he had access to preach, there were seals of his ministry. It is true, the success was frequently hid from himself; and while his Master secured the honour of making the word efficacious, he left the servant to cry, "I have laboured in vain; I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain." His natural modesty prevented him from cultivating acquaintance with many who valued his writings. He was honoured however, with the correspondence of the late Rev. Messrs. John Mason, of New-York; Annan, of Boston; Archibald Hall, of Well-Street, London; with that also of the Rev. Mr. Philips, late of Sarum; the Rev. Mr. Simeon, of Cambridge; the late Countess of Huntingdon, and others. He received a kind and earnest invitation from the Dutch church in the province of New-York, to be their tutor in divinity. This invitation, as well as his correspondence with the excellent personage last mentioned, he modestly studied to conceal from the knowledge of all.

As a member of society, he endeavoured to know the mind of God in regard to every particular part of his duty; and having found the truth, he avowed and acted upon it without disguise. When truths of importance were opposed, zeal for his Master and regard to mankind, brought him forward in their defence. This gave rise to such of his writings as were controversial. His peculiar principles, as a Seceder, never appear in his practical treatises. From conviction of duty, he first joined the Secession, and continued its steady friend as long as he lived; while, at the same time, he discovered the strongest affection to Gospel-ministers and private Christians of the established church, and other denominations. His prayers were always liberal and catholic. He seemed peculiarly concerned for the Anti-Burgher congregation in the neighbourhood, and for the parish church, especially at the time of their sacramental solemnities. In regard to what is called Church-communion, he was strict; but as to the communion of saints, as distinguished from it, he

was truly liberal. For years, a praying society met in his house; some of the members of which belonged to the established Church, and some to the Secession.

He manifested singular readiness to forgive his enemies. Notwithstanding the abuse he received while he was a student, it was remarked that he was never heard to open his mouth against the authors of it, or so much as mention the affair.

To certain writers who reviled him from the press, he meekly replied, "Whatever they wish me, my heart's desire is, that they may obtain redemption, through the blood of Christ, even the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace. Whatever they call me, may Jehovah call them the Redeemed of the Lord, Sought out, and Not forsaken." To a minister of another denomination, who had treated him with much incivility, he was enabled, by the grace of God, to afford supply in the day of his brother's poverty, by secret remittances of money; and after his decease, he offered to take one of his destitute orphans and bring him up with his own children.

On the settlement of any of his students, as fixed pastor to a congregation, he usually sent him a paper of excellent counsels in regard to the exercise of his ministry. There are many valuable letters in the possession of the children of deceased ministers and private Christians, full of scriptural & suitable comfort and advice, which he sent on the death of their parents. Many a time did he wipe off the tear from the widow's face, by leading her faith to the promises of the covenant, and ministering to the supply of her necessities. He was singularly backward to believe ill reports of any, but especially of those who fill public stations; being convinced that such reports have very often no foundation, and produce the very worst effects. Therefore, as he would not suffer others to attack characters in his presence, he himself most conscientiously avoided the defiling practice.

As tutor to candidates for the holy ministry, his care was to give them a connected view of Gospel-truth, both doctrinal and practical: and that they might be able to support and illustrate the several articles of our holy religion, he endeavoured to render them mighty in the Scriptures. In his system of Divinity and cases of Conscience, the public have a view of the particular topics which he used to explain to his pupils at large. It was his concern also to make them acquainted with the history of the church; and what he published on this subject he had compiled chiefly for them. He urged with great earnestness on their minds, to make them-

elves well acquainted with the oracles of God in the original tongues. Next to these, he recommended, the Compendium of Turrentine; Owen's Work's; Fisher's Work on the Assembly's Catechism; the Writings of Boston, and the Erskines; the Marrow of Modern Divinity, with Boston's Notes; Marshall on Sanctification; Cole on God's Sovereignty; Herve's Theron and Aspasio, with his Defence against Wesley; Beart's Vindication of the Law and Gospel; Halyburton's Defence of Revealed Religion; his Memoirs, together with those of Alexander Archibald, published at Edinburgh in 1768. He earnestly warned his students against a merely philosophical way of studying divinity; and strenuously pressed on their minds the absolute necessity of heart-religion, that they might make proficiency in their studies. His address to them, prefixed to his system, clearly evinces that he regarded this as a matter of the very last importance. No man could bear more patiently with the imprudence and weakness of some of them; and yet when there was occasion, he most faithfully admonished them. His admonitions indeed deeply impressed the consciences, and were long & gratefully remembered. He was, in truth among them, as a father among his children: he loved them, and studied their good; and they loved him, and regarded his counsel. No season of the year was so pleasant, either to the professor or to the students, as the time of attending the Divinity-Hall. The serious and solemn addresses which, on particular occasions, he made to them, and especially when they parted, were affecting indeed, and calculated to leave the best impressions. Many of his sayings at those times, it is believed, will never be forgotten by those who heard them. The many able, useful, and acceptable ministers, both in Great Britain and Ireland, whom he trained up for the sacred office, evince the ample success with which the Lord crowned his labours.

He fell asleep in Jesus, June 19, 1787.

FROM THE NEW-YORK SPECTATOR.

PRESIDENT DWIGHT, ON DUELLING.

THE author has taken a comprehensive view of the *folly*, the *sin*, and the *mischiefs* of duelling. In the progress of the discussion, he has ably refuted the arguments by which

duellists attempt to vindicate the barbarous and Gothic custom. The following extract concludes this elegant and valuable discourse—a discourse which ought to be possessed, and attentively read by every gentleman in the community.

“All these things reason and humanity, and religion plead; yet how often, even in this infant country, this country, boasting of its knowledge and virtue, they plead in vain! Duels in great numbers are fought; revenge is glutted; and the miserable victims of wrath and madness are hurried to an untimely end. Come then, thou surviving, and in thine own view, fortunate and glorious champion; accompany me to the scenes of calamity, which thou hast created, and survey *the mischiefs of duelling*.

“Go with me to yonder church yard. Whose is that newly opened grave? Approach, and read the letters on the yet uncovered coffin. If thou canst retain a steady eye thou wilt perceive that they denote a man, who yesterday beheld and enjoyed the light of the living. Then he shared all the blessings and hopes of life. He possessed health, and competence, and usefulness, and reputation.—He was surrounded by neighbors who respected, and by friends who loved him. The wife of his youth found in him every joy, and the balm of every sorrow. The children of his bosom hung on his knees to receive his embrace, and his blessing. In a thousand designs was he embarked, to provide for their support and education, and to settle them usefully and comfortably in the world—He inspired all their enjoyments; he lighted up all their hopes.

“Yesterday he was himself a creature of hope, a probationer for immortality. The voice of mercy invited him to faith and repentance in the Lord Jesus Christ—to holiness, and to Heaven.—The day of grace shone—the smiles of forgiveness beamed upon his head.

“While this happy day lasted, God was reconcilable, his Redeemer might be found, and his soul might be saved. The night had not then come upon him, in which no man works.

“Where is he now? His body lies mouldering in that coffin. His soul has ascended to God, with all its sins upon its head, to be judged and condemned to wretchedness, which knows no end. Thy hand has hurried him to the grave, to the judgment, and to damnation. He affronted thee—and this is the expiation which thy revenge exacted.

“Turn now to the melancholy mansion, where, yesterday, his presence diffused tenderness, hope and joy. Enter the door, reluctantly opening to receive the most beloved guest.

Here mark the affecting group as assembled by this catastrophe. That venerable man, fixed in motionless sorrow, whose hoary head trembles with emotions unutterable, and whose eyes refuse a tear to lessen his anguish, is the father who begat him. That matron wrung with anguish is the mother who bore him. Yesterday he was their delight, their consolation, the staff of their declining years. To him they looked, under God, to lighten the evils of their old age; to close their eyes on the bed of death; and to increase their transports throughout eternity.

"But their comforts and their hopes have all vanished together. He is now a corpse, a tenant of the grave; cut off in the bloom of life, and sent unprepared to the judgment.

"To these immeasurable evils thou hast added the hopeless agony of remembering, while they live, that he was cut off in a gross and dreadful act of sin, and without even a momentary space of repentance; a remembrance which will envenom life, and double the pangs of death.

"Turn thine eyes, next, on that miserable form surrounded by a cluster of helpless and wretched children. See her eyes rolling with frenzy, and her frame quivering with terror. Thy hand has made her a widow, and her children orphans. At thee, though unseen, is directed that bewildered state of agony. At thee she trembles, for thee she listens; lest the murderer of her husband should be now approaching to murder her children also.

"She and they have lost their all. Thou hast robbed them of their support, their protector, their guide, their solace, their hope. In the grave all these blessings have been buried by thy hands. If his affront to thee demanded this terrible expiation, what, according to thine own decision, must be the sufferings, destined to retribute the immeasurable injuries, which thou hast done to them.

"The day of this retribution is approaching. *The voice of thy brother's blood crieth from the ground, and thou art now cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood. A mark is set upon thee by thy God; not for safety, but for destruction. Disease, his avenging angel, is preparing to hurry thee to the bed of death. With what agonies wilt thou there recall thy malice, thy revenge, and the murder of thy friend? With what ecstasy will thy soul cling to this world, and with what horror will it quake at the approach of eternity! Alone, naked, drenched in guilt, thou wilt ascend to God!—From him what reception wilt thou meet?—From his voice what language wilt thou hear? "Depart thou cursed into everlasting fire."* And lo!

the melancholy world of sin and suffering unfolds to receive thee. Mark, in the entrance, the man whom thou hast plundered of life, and happiness and Heaven, already waiting to pour on thy devoted head, for the indefinite wrongs thou hast done him, the wrath and vengeance of eternity.

"At the close of this awful survey, cast thine eyes once more around thee, and see thyself, and thy brother duellists, the examples, the patrons, and the sole causes, of all succeeding duelling. Were the existing advocates of this practice to cease from upholding it; were they to join their efforts to the common efforts of man, and hunt it out of the world; it would never return. On thee, therefore, and thy companions, the innumerable and immense evils of future duelling are justly charged. To you, a band of enemies to the peace and safety of man, a host of *jerobams*, who not only sin, but make *israel* to sin through a thousand generations, will succeeding ages impute their guilt, and their sufferings. Your efficacious and baleful examples, will make thousands of childless parents, distracted widows, and desolate orphans, after you are laid in the grave. You invite posterity to wrest the right of deciding private controversies out of the hands of public justice; and to make force and skill the only umpires between man and man. You entail perpetual contempt on the laws of God; kindle the flames of civil discord; and summon from his native abyss, anarchy, the worst of fiends, to lay waste all the happiness, and all the hopes of mankind.

"At the great and final day, your country will rise up in judgment against you, to accuse you as the destroyers of her peace, and the murderers of her children. Against you will rise up in judgment all the victims of your revenge, and all the wretched families, whom you have plunged in hopeless misery. The prowling Arab and the remorseless Savage, will there draw nigh, and whiten their crimes by a comparison with your's. They indeed, were murderers, but they were never dignified with the name, nor blessed with the privileges of Christians. They were taught from their infancy, that to fight and to kill, was lawful, honorable and virtuous. You were born in the mansion of knowledge, humanity and religion. At the moment of your birth, you were offered up to God, *baptised in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*. You were dandled on the knee, and educated in the school of piety.—From the house of God you have gone to the field of blood, and from the foot of the Cross, to the murder of your friends. You have cut off life in the blossom, and shortened, to the wretched objects of your wrath, the day of repentance and salvation.—The beams of

remarks, though I do not see any necessity that they should occupy a great deal of our time.

The first principle, to regulate human conduct, is the laws of honor—And here I will readily admit, that taking the word honor in its strictest sense, whatever is truly honorable is truly good. But when the laws of honor are reduced to a practical rule of conduct, they amount to nothing more, at least with the generality of men, than as a sense of character, or a regard to public opinion. It is true, however, that even this principle will have great influence on society which is tolerably moral. But as depravity increases it will relax its demands, and when vice becomes fashionable it will fall in with the current and accelerate the general corruption. Where is the society which has not complained of the injury it has received from false notions of honor? and what is the vice to which this wild and fickle principle has not at sometime given its patronage. Instead of supposing that this principle will regulate the world, its wild and excentric operations shew that it stands in need of religion to regulate itself.

The next principle to which Infidel philosophers appeal for the government of the world, is the moral fitness of things, or the propriety and decency of virtue—If men were destitute of appetites and passions; if they were subject to no vicious habits or propensities, it is not easy to say how far this principle might go. But in the present state of things decency and fitness are ideas too cold and feeble to answer much purpose. When appetite craves or passion hurries to its object, the man does not stop to enquire whether this be decent, or that be fit. Some more efficacious principle, which addresses itself to the heart, as well as the understanding, is necessary for the government of human nature.

But the last hope of the infidel yet remains. The diffusion of knowledge, or the improvements of science, will discover to mankind that their interests consist in the performance of their duty—But for the refutation of this theory, it seems only necessary to ask whether men be virtuous in proportion to their information, for if science can cure the evils of the human heart, men will certainly advance in virtue as they advance in knowledge. But I am afraid the fact will rather come out the reverse of this. Or at all events, however ignorant the vicious may sometimes be, those men whose vices are the most injurious are generally men of considerable information. But the following statement satisfies me, that no scientific improvement whatever can remove the depravity of the human mind. It requires but little knowledge to convince a man that malice and all the guilty passions are painful in their ope-

ration ; that benevolence and virtue confer peace of mind ; that temperance conduces to health, and honesty gains confidence. How then is knowledge to reform the world ? She need not teach us those things which we know already, and she cannot teach us any thing more efficacious or more to her purpose. It is therefore abundantly plain, that mere knowledge and self-love, can never be so managed as to lead mankind to the right performance of duty. It is true, indeed, that the faithful performance of duty is the only way of securing our best interests—but in that case, it must be our principal aim to do the duty, and not to serve ourselves ; as the orator is sure to please best, who, at the time, never thinks of pleasing. The best external actions lose their merit, when the motives which prompt them are altogether of the sordid and selfish cast ; and the man who has no higher object in view than his own immediate interests, may be ostentatious or hypocritical, but never can be good—he cannot never possess that virtue which constitutes the basis of social happiness.

Some, however, may think, that although these observations shew the necessity of some other religion, they are not conclusive in favor of propagating Christianity, as the religion of nature or some theological system might do as well. I do not intend here to shew the advantages which Christianity possesses, above every other system with which the world has ever been acquainted ; but shall only observe, that in a country once favored with the light of divine revelation, the choice appears to be between that religion and none. Such a country cannot go back to pagan superstition ; for the rites of paganism and idolatry appear too absurd to those who have ever seen the Bible. And to me it appears equally clear, that the religion of nature cannot be retained, or at the best but very imperfectly retained in a country whence Christianity has been expelled. Natural and revealed religion have so much in common that the same depravity of the human mind, which opposes the one will oppose the other. The man cannot be found who is an enemy to revealed religion, and a friend to natural religion in its full extent. And indeed natural religion does not appear calculated to stand without revelation, as the light it exhibits when taken by itself, is more calculated to trouble than console the mind. It teaches us our obligations, but teaches at the same time, that those obligations have been violated—we are sinners, but we have to do with an holy God—There is a future judgment or retribution, but will not the sentence go against us ? These are among the purest dictates of natural religion ; but when a person once becomes puzzled

by such unwelcome truths and reflections, and can see no certain way for the pardon of sin, he will either discard natural religion altogether, or fritter it down in such a manner that it will impose no restraint upon his conduct.

If the preceding observations be well founded, it is then certain that if we lose our hold of Christianity, the last anchor of our hopes is gone; and nothing will be left to restrain the worst of passions or prevent the most destructive consequences of depravity. I do not, however, suppose that if Christianity were immediately destroyed, all these fatal consequences would instantaneously ensue; the progress of the human mind is gradual even in vice. Infidels who have had a religious education, or who have been educated in a country where Christianity has given the tone to morals, would not immediately throw off all regard to propriety and decency of conduct. Early habits of sobriety would continue to operate, and if these habits should be combined with literary pursuits, the effects would still be greater. But those habits would gradually wear out when the restraints which first produced them were gone; and when infidels no longer wished to propagate their cause by giving it the appearance of virtue. Each successive generation would become more dissolute than the former, till all the land marks of virtue were beaten down; and lawless passions should ravage and desolate the world.

Hitherto we have only attempted to prove that the happiness of society requires some religion, and that our circumstances make it necessary to retain the Christian religion, or to have none; we might now proceed to shew the peculiar advantages of Christianity for promoting human happiness. To insist on the comparative excellence of the Christian system seems hardly necessary, for I believe there is no other religion ever professed by man, which the boldest infidel would venture to compare with it. If there is, whether it be the Mahometan, the Gentoo, the Chinese, or any of the Pagan systems of antiquity; let it be produced, and a fair comparison made. But apprehending that we shall never be confronted by any attempts of this kind, I shall simply proceed to mention some properties of the Christian religion, which ought to recommend it to every friend of human happiness. It teaches a morality so perfect as to have no defect, and which never will admit of any improvement. This is a fact which ought to be seriously weighed. For 4,000 years the world had been improving in science, but their morality and religion grew worse and worse. Jesus Christ at length ap-

peared, and taught the world a system of morality (to say nothing of its piety) in which his enemies have never been able to discover a single error; and to which his friends could never make any addition. Does not this fact prove that the Christian religion is divine? But I am digressing from the point. Christianity affords us the most perfect examples of piety and virtue. Its laws are pure and spiritual, commanding the performance of every duty; and it teaches us to believe that those laws will be faithfully executed by a God of infinite holiness, and of almighty power; and what gives a commanding efficacy to the whole is, that Christianity supports all its doctrines by an evidence which will bear the strictest investigation. It appears to me, that as the light of science advances, the evidence of this religion is every day acquiring new force; and it would seem that when just rules of philosophizing, and of examining evidence are universally established, this religion must compel universal assent. It is true that during the eighteenth century (a very enlightened period,) there have been many infidels, but then they have betrayed many symptoms of doubtful and misgiving minds. Rousseau's panegyric on our Saviour is so well known, that it need not be quoted here. He acknowledged, however, that the life and death of our Saviour exhibited so many things more than human, that it furnished many arguments in favor of Christianity which he could not answer: after this he lived and wrote in opposition to Christianity, but how he died after such a confession, and such a course of conduct I am not able to say. Sceptics have boasted that Hume died like a Hero; Christian philosophers have said with more justice, that "He died as a fool dieth." His last moments were spent in silly attempts at wit about his expected interview with Charon the ferryman of Hades. This was certainly a constrained and hypocritical part. Death on any system is a serious thing; and the man who treats it in any other way than as serious, is either out of his senses, or does not give scope to the real feelings of his heart. As to Voltaire, the great Champion of infidelity, the horror of mind in which he died exceeds almost any thing of the kind which has ever been related; and it would be easy to furnish a dreadful catalogue of the names of those who followed Voltaire in his life and doctrines, and who followed him thro' the same dreadful scene in death. It is true, the friends of the deceased have many reasons for keeping events of this kind as secret as possible; but notwithstanding all their care so much has transpired, that it never would have been easier, than in the present age, to form a long list of infidels

who have died in horror and despair. And what do all these things mean! Does not this statement prove, that the increasing light of science makes it a dreadful thing to oppose Christianity? May not the time soon come when few will venture to oppose that religion, which exhibits its enemies in chains of darkness even before they leave the present state. How invincible must be the evidence of that religion; which, in spite of all the mists that prejudice and wicked passions can throw over the understanding, makes its way with so much power to the hearts of its enemies?

It is plain to every one, that a religion which teaches such a pure and sublime morality; and whose evidence is so forcible, must have great influence in strengthening the power of conscience, and conscience is certainly the best safeguard of all our rights. Only consider how great is the power of man to do mischief; almost infinitely greater than to do good. How easy is it to destroy human life, or to demolish the finest works of art? What might not the assassin and the incendiary do, if conscience did not hold them back. Conscience in two ways prevents the perpetration of crimes;—first, by the horror and dread of a guilty action; and secondly by the fear of detection. A bad conscience has often led to detection; examine a guilty man, and his guilt is likely to become manifest. Even without any examination a bad conscience has often detected the perpetrators of notorious crimes. And let any one judge how much such a principle must contribute to the security of society, and how important it is, that it should be re-enforced by all the considerations contained in divine revelation.

But to conceive rightly of the tendency of Christianity to promote human happiness, we must suppose the time arrived when Christianity shall have produced its full effect; and all its precepts shall be completely obeyed. Suppose the time were come, when all men shall *do to others as they would that others should do to them*; when war and oppression should cease all over the world; when that religion which visits *the widow and the fatherless in their affliction*; and enjoins every thing that is *true, honest, lovely, and of good report*.—When that charity which *suffers long and is kind, is not soon puffed up; and doth not behave itself unseemly*.—When that wisdom from above, which is *first pure, then peaceable, easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits*; when all these shall be in full operation, how much harmony and happiness shall prevail in the world. The tendency of Christianity undoubtedly is to promote such a state of things; its laws require it—Those laws speak to us with the authority and in the

name of God ; and the whole system, as we have already seen, is supported by an evidence which is extremely formidable, even to its greatest enemies.—Christianity not only tends to produce such a state of things but has already done much to accomplish it. There was a time when it was much more improbable that this religion should effect what it has already done, than it now is, that all the promises respecting the Millennium should be completely fulfilled. When there were but twelve illiterate and obscure men at the head of this system, and all the wealth, power, and philosophy of the world combined against it ; who would then have thought that Christianity should have penetrated with its benign light, the recesses of cruelty and darkness ; should have made its way to courts and palaces, and set nations free from the yoke of superstition. All this Christianity has already done, as an instrument in the hands of that divine Spirit, which will never forsake its ordinances, and which will never bless the ordinances of any other religion. This religion in its progress, has reformed the drunkard and the profligate ; taught the proud to be humble, and the malicious to be peaceful ; it has calmed the most unruly minds, and proselyted the philosopher to that peace which he could never find before. And why should we not believe that this religion will cover the earth with the knowledge of God, and leave nothing to hurt or destroy in all his holy mountain.

But before I leave this part of the subject, I shall notice one or two prominent objections. In the first place, it is objected that although Christianity teaches a good morality, it has been long in the world without producing its proper effect. It may be remarked, that this objection comes with a bad grace, from those who make it. The enemies of Christianity have always done their utmost to oppose and obstruct its influence, and now they pretend to complain that it has not produced its proper effect. What should we think of a society or neighborhood, who should oppose a Physician, refuse submission to his prescriptions, and then complain that his practice had never done them any good ? Let the enemies of Christianity obey its precepts, and then we shall see all the effects which it is calculated to produce, and all that its warmest friends ever expected from it. But it is not a fact, that Christianity has produced no good effect upon the world—Before the introduction of this system, whatever might have been the improvements of science, the state of religion and morals was truly deplorable—Human victims were sacrificed on their altars, and children burnt in the fires of Moloch !—Captives in war were reduced to a servitude

worse than death!—Gladiatorial, and other sports equally barbarous, were the common entertainments of the politest people; and the most unnatural crimes were in daily practice.—But since the propagation of Christianity, and, no doubt, owing to its influence, these savage spectacles and customs have passed away, and the morals of society have received a better tone. War indeed is not exterminated yet, but it is stripped of one half its horrors—a happy presage that it shall become quite extinct, when Christianity becomes universal.

But there is another plan of bringing this subject to a fair test. Let us suppose the professors of pure Christianity thrown into one class, and those who disregard its influence into another; which of these classes would have the advantage in point of moral rectitude—or which would exhibit the most numerous instances of depravity? For the decision of this question, examine the lists of the *penitentiary* and *gal-lows*. How rarely, in either of these, will you find a professor of religion of any denomination? And if this view of the subject, be so much for the honor of religion, how much more credit would she obtain, were all the churches purged of those hypocritical members, whose conduct proclaims, even to the infidel world, that their lives are at variance with their profession.

But the next objection to Christianity is, that it has not only failed as to doing much good, but has actually been the cause of much evil, as it has given rise to *crusades*, *persecution*, and *war*. I think, however, it ought to be admitted, that no book is accountable for actions to which it gives no countenance, and much less for such as it absolutely condemns. I know not how it happens, but objections are often admitted against Christianity, which are too silly to have weight in any other case. The general scope of Scriptures is to teach universal benevolence, toleration, and the forgiveness of injuries. They even make love to our enemies, a condition of own forgiveness at last. It would be thought very childish to say no worse of it, in any case to charge such a system, as the cause of persecution and war.—But the enemies of religion seem to overlook the distinction between the real and the professed causes of war—The real causes of war, on the criminal side, are *ambition*, *avarice*, and the *love of power*; but the professed cause, or pretext, is always something good—it is *liberty*, *property*, *civil rights*, or *religion*. But some men would persuade us, to lay religion aside, because it has been made a pretext for unjust wars. Will they also persuade us, to lay aside our *liberty*, our *pro-*

erty, and our civil rights? This, however, is only one specimen out of many, of the unfairness with infidels' reason.

We shall now conclude this essay, by a few remarks on the importance of religion, as it respects a future state of existence :

This is certainly the most important point of view in which the subject can be considered. Time cannot in any respect be compared to eternity ; as that which does good for a limited time bears no proportion to that which does good forever. The great events of nature and the revolutions of the world, derive their principal importance from the influence they may have on the true religion, and the future happiness of mankind. For considering them merely as to their temporal consequences, the happiness or misery they produce falls infinitely short of what would accrue to an individual from the neglecting or securing of his eternal interests. The soul that leaves the body prepared for the enjoyment of God, has immortal oceans of bliss before it. It has reached the skies which the clouds of affliction can never darken ; and traverses the fields where briars and thorns can never grow. Happy souls who serve your God day and night in his temple : your hours of sin are ended, and your tears are wiped away : eternity may roll on, but it has no changes for you to fear : worlds may come into existence, or worlds may perish ; what numberless exertions of creating power may you yet survey ! But you have nothing to do but to learn more of God, and drink purer pleasures from the fountains of *eternal life*.

On the other hand no object is more pitiable, than the sinner who dies unprepared. In a few moments of giddy and thoughtless pleasure he had fitted himself for eternal ruin. His Sun sets in a troubled sky ; he goes out of life with fearful suspicions, and the event shews him he did not suspect too much. The long period between death and the resurrection is to him a period of inconceivable distress—his dwelling is a lake of fire, and his conscience a worm that never dies ; his eyes survey the blackness of eternal darkness, his companions are howling and despairing fiends, and his employment is weeping and wailing and gnashing his teeth. But when the day of judgment draws near, and the sign of the Son of Man appears on high, those troubled ghosts feel a horror which they never felt before. The second death is coming upon them and their torments are but beginning to begin. These are the views which the sacred records give us of the destinies of good and bad men—*He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned.*

For the Virginia Religious Magazine.

YOUR fears dismiss, ye trembling saints,
No more indulge your sad complaints,
Nor yield to unbelief;
The Gospel spreads: the dead awake,
See! haughty sinners, fear and quake,
And prostrate, seek relief.

The Lord of hosts makes bare his arm:
His heralds spread a loud alarm,
From east to west it flies:
Unusual power his word attends;
Insulting foes are chang'd to friends;
And Satan's empire dies.

Stern Infidels no more enquire
"Where is your God," they dread his ire,
Nor dare insult his word,
If Jesus speaks, a raging Saul,
In mild submission, hears his call,
And owns him as his Lord.

Dear Saviour push thy conquests on,
Like lightning let thy Gospel run,
All obstacles remove,
To heathen lands the light convey,
The murd'ring savage teach to pray,
And sing redeeming love.

Let wars and desolations cease:
The nations bind in lasting peace,
From jarring passions free:
May pride and enmity remove,
And grace descending from above
Conform mankind to thee.

All honest efforts God will bless
To spread the knowledge of his grace,
The triumphs of the Cross,
The Missionaries pray'r he'll hear,
In toils support him, calm his fear,
And compensate his loss.

S.

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