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THE  
VIRGINIA  
RELIGIOUS MAGAZINE,

FOR THE YEAR

1806.

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PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATRONAGE OF THE SYNOD OF  
VIRGINIA, BY THE EDITORS.

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VOLUME II.

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LEXINGTON:

PRINTED BY SAMUEL WALKUP.

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1806.

## P R E F A C E.

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THIS number begins the second volume of the VIRGINIA RELIGIOUS MAGAZINE. During the last year the Magazine obtained considerable patronage, but it was also subjected to considerable discouragement and difficulty. The publication of a periodical pamphlet in this country, was a new experiment. In a situation so remote from the seaport towns, we could not immediately form those connections which would furnish us with the articles necessary for such a work in an advantageous manner; besides the printer who executed it did not possess the experience he has now acquired, nor did the friends of the publication, whilst its success was doubtful, discover so much alacrity in furnishing materials as they have since done. These were among the causes, why some numbers of the last year did not appear to so much advantage as could have been wished. But notwithstanding the influence of these causes, the Synod of Virginia have determined that the publication should be continued. The principal reasons for this determination we shall lay before the public, believing that their importance entitles them to the consideration of every Christian.

In the first place, it was the opinion of that Reverend body, that such publications as Magazines, are very necessary to the prosperity of the church. The visible church constitutes the kingdom of our Saviour on earth. The successes and losses of each part of this kingdom, are

the successes and losses of the whole, and it seems necessary that the whole should have information as far as possible of the situation of its particular parts. The affairs of a civil government could not well be conducted without some vehicle of political information; this is remarkably true of those governments which depend very much on the agency of the people; and we think the observation applies with as much force to religion as it does to politics. Without some vehicle of religious information, the larger judicatories of the church are much less useful than they might otherwise be, because their decisions, recommendations, and advice, are in a great measure lost, and the wisdom of the whole cannot be employed to enlighten and conduct the particular branches. It is worthy of remark, that the apostle Paul was very careful to inform particular churches when other churches had distinguished themselves by acts of pious munificence and charity, in order to excite a christian emulation, and if such communications were needful in apostolic times, they are equally necessary and might be equally beneficial now. This position is happily illustrated by a late occurrence announced in the Assembly's Magazine, a gentleman on hearing a letter read containing an account of the propagation of the gospel among the Indians, immediately gave one hundred dollars to aid the undertaking. And every one knows that the late missionary publications, have given a much wider spread and greater efficacy to the missionary spirit, and upon the whole, we apprehend, that nothing would tend more directly to the quickening and prosperity of the churches, than well written accounts of remarkable conversions

and revivals. But information respecting such events as we have mentioned, cannot be extensively circulated without a magazine or some similar vehicle of religious intelligence.

MAGAZINES may also be very useful in diffusing doctrinal information and promoting a knowledge of the holy Scriptures. It is also a consideration of importance, that the profits of the publication will make a valuable accession to the missionary funds of the Synod.

THE above were the principal reasons which determined the Synod to continue the magazine. And if it was the duty of the Synod to be swayed by such considerations, it would seem to be the duty of private Christians to co-operate with them in the execution of their plan. Some may suppose that all the objects we have mentioned might have been as well, or better accomplished by abandoning our own and supporting the Assembly's Magazine. The Assembly's Magazine we are very willing to recommend. We trust it will be a useful publication, and it has in view the same objects with our own. But on account of the greater expence of obtaining it, and other circumstances, it was apprehended we could not give it so great a circulation as we might give our own. A magazine should circulate very generally to answer all the valuable purposes for which it is intended. It would be desirable that every private Christian should have the perusal of it,

WE shall conclude by requesting those who intend patronising the magazine to be particularly attentive to whatever may promote its prosperity. When any thing is to be effected by joint exertions, every member should do his part. We hope those in the habit of writing, will not neglect to furnish materials for the publication, as the credit of it must in a great measure depend on the supply of ORIGINAL matter. Others may have it in their power to send forward accounts of remarkable deaths, conversions, revivals, or of any thing relating to the general objects of this work. Such as have in their power to increase the number of subscribers, may render a valuable service to the magazine: And it will not be forgotten, that punctuality in collecting and remitting the money subscribed is essential in undertakings of this kind. Here is a wide field in which almost every person may find something to do: and let all remember, that the prayers of the pious should accompany every effort for promoting the divine glory, and the good of the church.

*January 1806.*

THE EDITORS.

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THE VIRGINIA RELIGIOUS MAGAZINE

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VOL. II.]

JANUARY, 1806.

[No. 1.

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BIOGRAPHY.

JOHN BLAIR SMITH was born in Lancaster county, in the state of Pennsylvania, on the 12th of June, 1756. His father, the Rev. Dr. Robert Smith, was pastor of a presbyterian church in Pequa of that county, and much esteemed on account of his uniform piety, his correct ministerial conduct, and his theological and classical acquirements. John was the fourth of six sons, all of whom, excepting the youngest who died in childhood, acquired the rudiments of literature under the immediate care and tuition of their father in an academy which he had established with a view to their education, as well as to the public utility. In very early life he exhibited marks of mental energy, and of intelligence uncommonly prompt; and was particularly distinguished by an ingenuous habit of speech and behaviour, a warmth of heart, and pointed purpose in his juvenile pursuits. These appearances did not escape the seasonable notice of his interesting and anxious parents; and on these, as properly qualified and directed, they fondly raised very pleasing and sanguine hopes of his future usefulness and honor. In consequence, he became an object of much early parental attention, and of many pious parental prayers. Nor was it long before those prayers were favoured with signal intimations of a gracious acceptance. When he was about fourteen years of age, it pleased God, by a remarkable effusion of heavenly influence, to excite amongst the youth of that academy, a very serious and deep attention to the important concerns of religion and their souls. Of that influ-

ence he largely partook ; and, in a short time he openly avowed himself a disciple of that Jesus, whom he afterwards so successfully preached. From that important period, he grew up, not in stature only, but in heavenly grace. His progress likewise in his academical studies was expeditious, and highly promising. At the age of sixteen he entered the junior class in the college of New-Jersey, at that time under the direction of Dr. Witherspoon, whose literary accomplishments, and talents for instruction have been justly celebrated. Under the advantages there enjoyed, his improvements were alike extensive and rapid. And it is worthy of observation, that, partly from a natural firmness of mind, and partly from an habitual sense religion, he was, at no period of his residence at the college, though of a disposition remarkably cheerful, and prone to social intercourse, known to be drawn into any form of frivolity or dissipation incompatible with the strictest christian integrity and order.

He received the first honors of the college in September 1773. From this time he devoted himself almost entirely to theological studies under the direction of his brother, the Rev. Samuel S. Smith, at that time president of the college of Hampton Sidney, in the state of Virginia ; and from the progress which he made in that sublime speculation, added to his previous improvements in human science and practical religion, it may well be supposed, that his trials for the christian ministry, and admission to the sacred office, were accompanied with unusual approbation and hopes. He was licensed to preach the gospel by the Presbytery of Hanover in that state in the year 1778 ; and how far, in event, he justified those hopes, is well known in the several departments of the church in which he was afterwards called to officiate. Of the many talents he possessed, it may with confidence be said, he suffered none, whose use might contribute to the great end of his ministry, to remain unoccupied ; and he used them with a zeal and address singularly ardent, pointed, and impressive.

In the year 1779, he accepted a call to a church in the state of Virginia; and, at the same time, succeeded his brother, the Rev. Dr. Samuel S. Smith, now president of the college of New-Jersey, as principal of the seminary of Hampden Sidney. Here he was eminently honored by the great head of the church, in having been made instrumental in promoting a general religious solicitude and reformation amongst the people of his charge and of the adjacent neighbourhood. On this interesting occasion, he considered himself as called to extraordinary ministerial exertions. And extraordinary, indeed, were the exertions which he made. He generally preached once, at least, every day; and in the evenings, he was commonly engaged either in social conference, or in conversation with individuals who were anxious for direction in their spiritual concerns. Engagements however, so constant and interesting, he soon found to interfere, in several respects, with that attention, that was requisite to the order and improvement of the college over which he presided. He therefore determined to resign this part of his charge and to give himself wholly to the more indispensable work of the christian ministry. This work, from that time, he prosecuted with an assiduity and ardor peculiar to himself: and many are the precious fruits of those his *labors in the Lord* remaining to this day. But, desirous, as he was, of an unabating continuance of those labours, he at length experienced the necessity of restraining them in a considerable measure. His bodily health was very sensibly and rapidly reclining. Having, however, about this time received a very urgent invitation from the third Presbyterian Church in the city of Philadelphia, and considering that, in this proposed connexion, he might pursue his desirable work without exposing his constitution to the power of several unfavourable circumstances, to which he was then subjected, he accepted the invitation, with the advice of his brethren of the Presbtery, and was installed as Pastor of that church in the month of December 1791. This connexion was notwithstanding but of short duration; by a few



months only exceeding four years. The celebrity, he had acquired by his attainments in science, and in the various branches of literature, procured him the decree of doctor in divinity. This honour was conferred by the trustees of Nassau Hall, in the state of New-Jersey;—a honour, which, perhaps, has never been conferred more deservedly in that or any other similar institution.

In the year 1795, Union College in the state of New-York was founded. The trustees, sensible of the importance of electing for the first president, a man of experienced talents, and one eminently qualified for the arduous task of arranging and successfully conducting a newly established institution, gave their suffrages to the subject of the present memoir. In consequence of this appointment he resigned his establishment in Philadelphia, and accepted the presidency of that institution. For three years he presided over this seminary, enjoying the highest approbation of the trustees, and the most affectionate attachment of the students.

But still, amidst the literary occupations in which he was there engaged, (to quote from a character given him in a funeral sermon by the Rev. Dr. Blair) 'the studies of theology, and the attentions more immediately attached to his sacred office, most warmly interested his heart, and were his predominant delight. For these he would improve, as far as he consistently could, every opportunity, which providence appeared to offer him. And although the energies, particularly of his public addresses, were often injurious to his bodily frame, yet no persuasion could prevail on him to spare himself. It was his joy and his glory to spend and be spent in his master's cause.' In consequence, he here again suffered beneath the pressure of encreasing infirmity. His multiplied cares and laborious zeal were gradually diminishing the strength of a constitution originally good. Yet he was ever extremely unwilling to decline the invitations to public ministerial service which were frequently occurring. In this case, in all

probability, had he continued there much longer, without a suspension at least of some of his numerous attentions, he must eventually have fallen an untimely sacrifice to them. Such, however, was the continued attachment of the people of his former charge in Philadelphia, that on receiving information of the present state of his health, and of the apparent causes of its decline, they did not hesitate immediately to recall him to his former services amongst them : and he, on his part, was not long in deliberating on the expediency of embracing their affectionate invitation. He accordingly, to their great joy, returned to his former charge ; and was reinstated in the month of May, 1799.

His departure from the college was deeply regretted by the patrons of that institution, as well as by the students and all the friends of literature and science.

After his return, and during his continuance with the people of his former charge, his services were highly beneficial in quickening and establishing many serious christians, and in exciting many others to a solicitous attention to the things which belong to their eternal peace ; and, in fine, in rendering that congregation, on many accounts, one of the most respectable in the populous and flourishing city of Philadelphia. But their joy (such was the will of Heaven) was ere long turned into mourning. About the middle of August 1799, he was seized of the pestilential distemper, which was then commencing in the city, and which prevailed with encreasing mortality until the month of November following. He died on the 22d day of August ; and he died with all that apparent resignation and joyful hope, which might be expected in a christian so eminently endowed, and so firmly established in the faith of the glorious gospel.

It is much to be regretted, that, possessed of talents so far above the ordinary grade, and of a mind so richly, and so variously furnished, he did not leave behind him some productions which might have served as monuments of his merit, and as beneficial legacies to mankind. But, such was his zeal

and assiduity in the active services of the church, as to afford but little time for designs of this nature. His memory, however, will always be dear to his friends, especially to those in whose estimation the cause he so ardently and successfully promoted, was precious. To them, though dead, he still speaketh.

I will only add, in the words of the afore-mentioned discourse, that, "Blessed with a memory uncommonly retentive, and aided by a superior relish for scriptural information, the language of the sacred oracles was at all times familiar to him. This was manifest by his great ability and aptness in '*dividing the word of truth.*' In consequence, however, unexpectedly he might be called to dispense that word, he could '*bring out of his treasure things both new and old.*' How clearly and fully was he wont to explain his subject! With what irresistible argument would he confirm the truth! With what admirable dexterity would he accommodate it to the state and characters of his audience! With what persuasion would he move the heart! With what luminous force would he arrest and strike the conscience! He spoke as one who knew the worth of souls. He spoke as a messenger from God to perishing immortals. He spoke as impelled by the powers of the world to come.

He was conscientiously punctual in attendance on the several ecclesiastical judicatories with which he was connected.—To his conduct in these, the presbyterian church in the United States is much indebted. His wisdom, moderation, and clearness of conception, added to a happy facility and pertinence in speech, a force in reasoning, and well known zeal for truth and duty, contributed to render his counsels always weighty and decisive.

His aspect was intelligent, and rather prepossessing. His deportment was easy and serious, yet agreeably animated. His temper was mild and accommodating, yet enlightened and steady. His conversation was, at once, instructive and entertaining. With his friends he was often facetious, and sometimes witty; yet never, in his most unrestrained indulgences,

would he violate the claims of christian decorum and prudence.

In his disposition, he was open-hearted and liberal; compassionate to the sick and afflicted; and, as his ability extended, he was always the poor man's friend. In the tenor of his conduct, indeed, he manifested a noble indifference towards earthly things.

As a friend, he was warm, sincere, and steadfast, equally remote from ostentatious profession, and from precarious humor. His approbation was not easily gained, nor, when gained, was it easily lost.

As a husband, he was affectionate and kind. As a father, he was prudently indulgent and tender. In this latter relation, while he conciliated affection, and allured filial freedom, he failed not to command becoming veneration.

He married, in the state of Virginia, a daughter of Colonel John Nash. This pious and amiable lady, by whom he had five sons and two daughters, resides at present in Princeton in the state of New-Jersey.

Who, in short, that knew him, as the author of his funeral eulogy justly exclaims, would not be ready to say: "happy the family over which he presided; happy the man who was favored with his friendship; and more happy the people whose heavenly interests were his peculiar care! He was a public blessing to the church. He was an honor to the people of his pastoral charge. He was an ornament to the christian and ministerial profession. As the great apostle of the gentiles, he magnified his office. He spoke as he believed; he practiced as he spoke. He lived 'the good and faithful servant;' he died in the Lord, and 'his works have followed him.'

*General Assembly's Missionary Mag.*

*The Rev. Mr. Kitcherer's Narrative of his Mission to the  
Hottentots.*

(Continued from vol. 1, page 330.)

SEVERAL of the Corannas, from the Great, or Orange river, arrived at our settlement about this time, repeating the invitation they had before sent us, to remove to their country, which is about three hundred miles distant, and preach the word of life among them. We held a council with our old people, all of whom expressed their determination to follow us. Accordingly we set out in May, 1801. Brother Anderson, who had joined us some months before, preceded us, with part of our property; Kramer, Scholtz, and myself followed at a distance, with the bulk of our people. In the course of our journey we found the country far more populous than we had conceived.

One of our company whose name was Katjee, was taken so ill on the road, that we expected her dissolution every moment. In this critical situation she was greatly alarmed, and admonished the people, in very affecting strains, not to trifle with their souls, nor to think real conversion an easy work. Her discourses on this subject made lasting impressions on myself and others; but, I am sorry to say, after she recovered her health, and was out of danger, she relapsed into her former carelessness.

Proceeding on our journey, we were joined by Cornelius Koopman, who had not been with us more than a single day, when he was struck with convictions while I was praying. When I first saw him, I perceived so much pride in his carriage, that I entertained a very unfavorable opinion of him; but no sooner was his heart touched by grace, than the Lion was changed into a Lamb; the haughtiness of his deportment entirely forsook him; and he appeared to be possessed of that deeply humbled spirit, which I always considered as the most conspicuous token of real grace. He became remarkably cau-

tious in whatever he said, but discovered, at the same time; that "faith which worketh by love," in the exercise of which he enjoyed close communion with God. I recollect holding many a sweet conversation with Cornelius. "Ah," he would say, how happy should I, poor sinner, think myself, were I assured that Jesus is *my* Jesus; there would not be a more blessed creature on earth than myself; I am so poor here, that frequently I know not how to provide for my family; I would gladly cloathe my poor children, were it only in sheep skins, but alas! I have no supplies, for my few sheep are all gone; yet had I rather starve here, where Jesus is preached, than return to serve those christians, who never told me a word of God, or of Jesus, or of the way of salvation. After this man had entirely surrendered himself to the Lord, his whole walk and conversation bespoke the sincerity of his faith, and he became a pattern of godliness to all the company. Every day he would walk forth, three, four, or five times, into the solitude of the wilderness, (where I sometimes followed him unperceived) to hold converse with Jesus, by prayer—Many a time have I watched him, at a distance, wrestling with God, and was put to shame by his importunity. It was also his custom, about sun-set, to take with him two of his children, whom he tenderly loved, to a solitary spot, that they might be present at his devotions. And here I would make a general observation, that, when sitting by myself on some eminence, I often had the pleasure to observe some of my poor people, one here, behind a rock; another there, under a bush, earnestly engaged in private prayer: and seldom did Cornelius fail to appear with his two little ones in his arms, or led by his hand, whom he caused, with himself, to bow their young knees before the Lord. How was my faith strengthened by such cheering objects! I now plainly saw that the Lord Jesus had begun a good work among these poor heathen, and I was encouraged to hope, that he would triumphantly establish his church in this country, and cause his blessed word to be preached to the children, and children's children of the present generation.

Another person, named Roeloph, was a striking example of the power of divine grace. Having been deeply affected under the reading of the Scriptures, and praying in our morning service, I observed him sitting in a pensive posture on a wagon, apparently in great distress of soul. I approached him, and enquired into the cause of his dejection; when he returned the following answer: "O my dear Sir, never could I have thought that I was so great a sinner, such a monster of iniquity, and my state so dangerous, as I now perceive! God is a holy and righteous God, and I am such a vile sinner! Oh, the very thought makes me tremble, that God thus! thus! (meaning, by his motions, in the twinkling of an eye) may put an end to my life! Oh, if God should not have mercy for me, then must I sink into the eternal pit. Oh, I am greatly afraid, lest God should cause the earth to open her mouth, and swallow me up alive. O Sir, what must I do to be saved?"—I answered his question, as St. Paul did that of the Jailer, at Philippi; "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Let your fears, said I, drive you to the Saviour; lay fast hold of him as your redeemer; and then you need not be afraid. But, woe be to you if you seek peace from any other quarter, or try to find rest in the things of this world. Having approved of my advice, he daily applied by faith and prayer to Jesus, as a sinner who earnestly wishes to be saved by his free grace. But I know not the result of his profession, as he removed from us to a considerable distance among the farmers.

About the close of the month we reached the Great river, which, in the dry season, is about half as wide as the Thames at London bridge, and which was now so much swollen by the rains, as to be impassable: we therefore were obliged to wait for its fall. Our brethren Kramer and Anderson had previously crossed the river, and had begun to preach the gospel to the people, among whom they found a considerable attention. While we waited for the subsiding of the waters, with our people and cattle, some of our friends on the opposite shore, who were bold enough to swim across, assisted us in

constructing rafts. By means of these, we were enabled, in about a week, to get over the river, yet with great difficulty, for our raft sunk so deep, that I sat up to the middle in water. Here we rejoiced to find a great hunger for the bread of life; some cried, and others fainted under the preaching of the word.

We found it necessary shortly to look out for another position; more distant from this dangerous river, the inundations of which are so sudden, that men and beasts frequently perish in its mighty floods. We pitched on a spot called Reed Fountain, which some of us began immediately to clear for cultivation. While they were thus engaged, with about twenty Hottentots, the Corannas brought us regularly, every day, three sheep, and three hollow bamboo canes full of milk, as a present.

Here it was that sleeping one night with Mr. Scholtz and my Hottentots, by the side of a little cart, the barking of my spaniel dog disturbed my rest so much, that I was quite vexed at him. The Hottentots, however, understanding the little creature's meaning better than I did, looked carefully around, and soon discovered a Lion near us, who, like a cat, was creeping along the ground, in order to make a spring upon us. Immediately they snatched up their guns to fire at him; but the Lion, finding we were so well prepared to receive him, turned tail, and retreated with the utmost speed. As brother Scholtz and myself lay nearest to that spot from whence the Lion approached, we felt peculiarly thankful to our Lord for this new preservation.

Being now comfortably settled, we soon found ourselves surrounded by crowds of different people—Corannas, Namaquas, Hottentots, Bastard Hottentots, and Boschemen, together with their numerous flocks and herds. The Corannas and Namaquas lived servants to the Bastards, having been reduced to this abject condition by the depredations of a monster, known by the name of THE AFRICAN, a Bastard Hottentot. This bloody man, having murdered Pennar his master, collected a band of robbers, with whom he made incur-



sions into the Namaqua and Coranna countries. Some of these poor, timid people sent him a message, requesting that he would restore a little part of their property, at least a Cow for each family, that they might have a drop of milk for their starving children; the wretch promised to comply with their wishes on condition that they would cross the river and fetch, the animals; but when they came, he treacherously tied them to the trees, cut out their tongues, or otherwise maimed them; some of them he shot dead. Being thus reduced to extreme poverty, they were glad, for the sake of subsistence, to serve the Bastards, who treated them with great severity, flogging and abusing them like slaves, and allowing little more for their support than the milk of the sheep which they kept. This horrid monster, the African, understanding something of colonial politics, has hitherto contrived to evade deserved punishment. How great are the blessings of a good civil Government!

All our new friends expressed great joy at our coming to live among them; but particularly the poor oppressed Namaquas and Corannas, who looked up to us as a kind of protectors. Here we built a long shed of timber, reeds and clay, the roof reaching to the ground. The middle part of it was our church, at each end was a room, one of which was occupied by brethren Anderson and Kramer, the other by myself and brother Scholtz. The provisions were stored in my apartment. This building was appropriated to the worship of the Hottentots, another of a similar construction, was devoted to the instruction of the Corannas and Namaquas, whom we addressed by interpreters. Divine service was performed in both places at the same time, each of us officiating by rotation. For the purpose of raising a considerable quantity of vegetables, we planted a large garden, which we inclosed by a wall.

It pleased God, at this time, to visit my faithful fellow laborer, Mr. Scholtz, with a heavy affliction; he was confined for five months by a dangerous illness, which left a lameness in his, formerly, athletic body.

Our labors here appeared to be attended with a peculiar blessing, a great desire prevailing among the people to be taught the things which accompany salvation. The impressions made by the Spirit of God on the hearts of our hearers were very remarkable. What I am about to relate will probably appear to some readers perfectly ridiculous, but it is a fact that we were always obliged to have a bottle of vinegar on the table, for the relief of those who actually fainted under alarms of conscience and powerful convictions. Certain it is that the tears which were shed at that period among these poor people cannot be numbered, and though we could not say that these strong impressions always issued in sound conversion, yet we have reason to believe they did so in many instances. But it is the province of my brethren Anderson and Kramer to furnish the particulars of this work, as they are the stated laborers on the banks of the Great river. I shall however touch upon a few events which took place during my stay in those parts.

The most prominent of these was a visit of brother John Kock, who was going as a Missionary to the Briquas or Bootsuannas, a nation dwelling North-East from the Cape, and about eight days journey from us; these people differ entirely from the Hottentots, resembling the Caffres in their stature, habits and manner of life. John Kock brought me letters from my family in Holland, containing also the painful intelligence of the death of a very dear friend of mine at Cape town. My feelings on this occasion were exceedingly keen, but blessed by the Lord, who comforted me in my affliction.

Soon after this, the British commissioners, Messrs. Somerfield, Daniel, and Truther arrived here. We did our best to assist them in the prosecution of their journey to the Bootsuannas, accompanying them part of the way. John Kock followed them shortly afterwards.

Returning to the Great river, on horseback, attended by one Hottentot only, I was once obliged to sleep in the open

field. About midnight, our horses, which were fastened near us, began to be very unruly, and their noise awaked us both out of our sleep. The Hottentot was much alarmed, but seemed desirous of concealing from me the cause of this stir, to prevent my being alarmed also. Upon my interrogating him closely, he confessed that he saw a Lion at the distance of twenty or thirty yards. I myself soon perceived a pair of shining eyes, like two burning candles. The Hottentot, preparing to fire his piece, desired me to strike a light, and set the grass in a blaze. This being effected in a moment, we discovered a huge animal with his mane erect, just in the very act of springing upon us. At this critical moment, the Hottentot fired, and the Lion slunk away. This appeared the more extraordinary to us, as we could next morning, trace his bloody foot-steps on the ground;—a certain proof of his having been wounded. In such a case, the Lion, seldom, if ever, retreats, till he has avenged his blood: But the Lord was doubtless pleased to shut the mouth of this Lion. When we got home, the brethren informed us that, during our absence, the Lion had destroyed eighteen of our Oxen.

I now received the afflicting intelligence that Stephanos, who after leaving our settlement at Zak river, had gone to a horde of Bastard Hottentots, commonly called Cornelius Kock's Kraal, had there set up for a Missionary and a Prophet, establishing his authority on the basis of superstition so firmly, that his will had become the law of every individual in the horde, and the most atrocious crimes were committed by him with impunity. Whoever ventured to murmur against his abominable acts of rapine or lust, was sure to be put into the stocks, or to be beaten unmercifully. Stephanos had erected a Temple, resting on pillars, with an Altar within, on which sacrifices were offered. He had a number of select disciples, who, like himself, feigned trances, in which they lay for many hours, and out of which they pretended to awake with messages which they had brought from the angel Gabriel, or from God.

himself. Did the impostor wish to gratify his lust, his covetousness, or his revenge? an answer from heaven authorized him to effect his purpose. Should any dissatisfaction or lukewarmness appear among his followers? immediately the judgments of God, yea, the conflagration of the whole world were immediately threatened. Cornelius Kock himself, the chief, who possessed a vast property, was completely devoted to the will of this wretch. He would preach against us also, and we were apprehensive that his doctrine, like that of Mahomet, might widely diffuse its baneful influences among the neighboring heathen.

After mature deliberation, and consultation with my brethren, I attempted to go out, and stop his diabolical proceedings. As this measure was likely to be attended with danger, I took all our armed men with me. Stephanos, being apprized of our design, called a meeting of his followers, in which many messages from heaven were devised; he then told them that this was the important moment in which they were called upon to demonstrate their attachment to God and his prophet; but that, if they proved unfaithful, fire would come down from heaven to destroy them.

We approached his party. Their eyes sparkled with rage: Stephanos stepped forward, and offered me his hand. I refused to take it, but desired him to walk with me under a tree, where we would decide the matter. My people accompanied me to the spot, and he was covered by his followers. With my bible in my hand, I disputed with him four hours successively, and, I trust, experienced the peculiar assistance of the Holy Spirit. He insisted chiefly on the prophecy of Joel, concerning the visions and dreams of the latter days, and introduced many passages from the Revelations. I was enabled clearly to refute his arguments, to the great satisfaction of my people, who declared they had received light and blessings on that day, to which they had before been strangers.

Stephanos and his deluded followers were unconvinced; and becoming more and more enraged, they seemed disposed

to do me violence : but this my vigilant guardians knew how to prevent. The impostor himself conveyed to my mind a striking idea of the Chief of Hell. His eyes rolled and flashed ; his tongue moved with incessant volubility, and he strove to vindicate all his atrocities by examples derived from the Scriptures.

I thought myself now fully justified in ordering my people to seize him, as a malefactor already under the sentence of the law, that he might be conveyed to the Cape for punishment. My order was instantly obeyed, and he was made a prisoner in his own temple. In a moment his crest fell, and he requested me, in the French language, (which the people did not understand) to set him at liberty, promising, in that case, to leave the country. I replied, that if I was convinced that he felt due contrition for his crimes, and proved it by a frank confession of his guilt, I might, perhaps, let him go.

Immediately, he spoke to the people, in a crying tone of voice, acknowledging that he had imposed upon them—that if they went on in his ways they would certainly go to hell—and that they ought to thank God who had sent them teachers of the truth.

This confession had a wonderful effect on the multitude, who crowded round me, and thanked me heartily for what I had done, expressing boundless joy at their deliverance from the shackles of this tyrannical impostor. They wished now to send him away naked into the desert ; but I interfered ; and procured for him needful provisions, and a guide into the Namaqua country, towards the sea-coast, where I thought it possible he might meet with an European vessel, and so finally leave Africa. However, on his journey, he was recognized by Mr. Engelbrecht, a Farmer, who was also an Officer of the Militia ; this gentleman, in the execution of his duty, attempted to arrest him, but in the scuffle unfortunately fell : Stephanos, seizing the opportunity cut the throat of the Officer with a razor which was concealed in his book : after which he made his escape, and joined the noted robber, the

African, before-mentioned, with whom, I fear he still roves the desert.

After this event, I continued at the Great River a few days longer, preaching the gospel at John Kock's Kraal. From morning to night they entreated me to instruct them, and I felt peculiarly happy in my labours among these poor Boschemen. I have dwelt the longer on this visit, as it proves how easily such people might be won, at least to make an external profession of Christianity, if means proportioned to the magnitude and importance of the object, were duly employed. At present, Mr. Anderson and Mr. Kramer, are settled at that Kraal, and, I trust, are made a blessing to the people. Cornelius Kock, the Captain or chief, has since been baptized at Cape town, by a Clergyman of the Church of England.

Among the fruits of our labors in this country, Piet Goeman, who has been already mentioned, may be deemed one. By his walk and conversation he graces the gospel he believes, and is peculiarly dear to me. Old Berend is another seal of our ministry. He possesses a strong understanding, can read the bible very well, and is frequently engaged from morning to evening in prayer and meditation, His conduct keeps pace with his profession. A more circumstantial account of these and other converts, will probably be given by our brethren who are stationed there.

*(To be continued.)*

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‘*The Scriptures are profitable.*’

THUS Paul hath taught us. But Paul's opinion weighs but little, with many in this age of illumination; many are too wise to submit to his instructions. Unshackled by a *supposed* revelation, which they assert to be unnecessary, and, therefore untrue, they commit themselves to the direction of *reason*, as their sure and only guide. The scriptures are discarded, because it is pretended, that the rule of life is sufficiently plain without them, and that every thing necessary for man to know, may be clearly understood by unassisted human reason. Whom shall we believe Paul or the Philosophers? The opinions of both parties cannot be correct; the practical influence of their doctrines must be very dissimilar. If the scriptures are profitable, we ought to endeavor to derive from them every possible advantage; and they must be considered highly culpable who, having such a treasure proposed to them, reject it, without examination. Before we proceed to the determination of the subject of this controversy, it may be proper to observe, that the question is not whether the scriptures alone, or reason alone is to be chosen as our guide. The advocates of revelation profess to hold no doctrine subversive of reason. The inquiry is, *whether men in the due exercise of their rational faculties, may not derive important advantages from the holy scriptures.*

A moment's attention to the state of the christian and heathen world one might suppose sufficient, to put an end to this controversy. Let the most enlightened and civilized parts of the heathen world, be contrasted with any nation where the scriptures are read and believed, and let the unprejudiced say to which the preference is to be given; or which appears to be in circumstances the most eligible, the heathen or the christian?

If *reason alone* is sufficient to lead man to his Maker, certainly among the multitudes, in different ages and countries who have had reason alone for their guide, many may be pointed out, whose efforts have been crowned with success. To know what *unassisted* reason can do, let it be asked what it has done, where we are sure it has been left to its own efforts.

Will any person, at all acquainted with the state of the heathen world, venture to intimate, that correct sentiments respecting God, or his worship, were common in any part of it? The gross idoltry, so universally prevalent, shews, that the people knew not God. It is certainly necessary for man to have some knowledge of the character and perfections of his maker. This is not the opinion of christians alone; reflecting heathens entertained the same sentiment. They called in reason to aid them in the momentous inquiries. Is there a God? Or are there a plurality of beings who manage the affairs of mortals? Who, or what are they? Is man an accountable being? has he offended? How shall he appease his maker? What the answer of reason was to such inquiries as these, we learn from a single fact. They worshipped stocks and stones, four-footed beasts, fowls and reptiles.

But some may be ready to alledge, that though the mass of the people were involved in ignorance, and unable to extricate themselves from dark delusions, a few, at least, by unassisted reason, broke through the cloud, and discovered all that was necessary to be known respecting their maker. Who will furnish us with the names of the happy few, who soared so far above the attainments of their cotemporaries? If they are known, they may easily be named and a statement given of the doctrines they held; and a life corresponding with their doctrines may be held up as a proof that they had a sufficient knowledge of the Deity. Were the heathens to select from among themselves, one who might give the most favorable view of their sentiments and practice; probably Socrates would be the man. But alas! Socrates lived, and died worshipping the gods of his country. All his speculations were



insufficient to extricate him from base idolatry, or shew him that "they were no gods which were made by hands."

But could it be shewn, that one man, or even a thousand in every age, had, without the assistance of revelation acquired the knowledge of all necessary truth; revelation might have been very profitable, even to those, if by revelation they could have been led to the truth, by a less circuitous rout, than reason prescribed. But a knowledge of God is necessary not only for a few philosophers, but equally necessary for the most illiterate peasant. If, then the wisest Philosophers after their deepest researches were left to grope in darkness: If on the supposition their theories had been true, they needed a revelation to confirm themselves in the belief of their truth; what must become of the incalculable majority of the human race, to whom, if the Philosopher speaks at all, he speaks in an unknown language? Certainly the will of God revealed in a manner suited to their condition must be highly advantageous to them. It is true, that if but a solitary individual could be produced, who by reason alone had acquired the knowledge of God, it would then appear that reason was sufficient to lead to this issue, and it might be supposed possible that, were all men possessed of reason in an equal degree, and placed in circumstances equally advantageous, all would become equally wise, without revelation. But even on this supposition, the word of God must appear to be, not only profitable but necessary for man, in the condition in which we find him.

All men are not philosophers—Reason is not equal in all—All are not placed in circumstances equally auspicious—All are not equally disposed to exert themselves and make a proper improvement of their talents, their time, or their advantages. Let the power of reason be supposed ten fold greater than it is; let it be granted that if properly improved, it would render revelation unnecessary; yet, when it appears from universal experience that not an individual of the human race has ever made this improvement of his reason, may it not be

asked, of what advantage is this *supposed*, latent power, which has never been brought into exercise? How is a revelation rendered unnecessary, by this dormant power, any more than if man possessed it not? Nay. How have men found that they possess this power, when universal experience proves that it hath never been exerted? It is difficult to argue against experience. Men know, that in a state of health, and with the common use of their limbs, they can walk or run, but what would they think of a *philosopher* who would assure them that nothing was necessary but a vigorous exertion of their arms, and legs to enable them to fly and soar above the clouds?

What reason could not do, the holy Scriptures have done. "When the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." The christian whose mind is least cultivated; who can barely read his Bible has more exalted sentiments respecting the character of his Maker, than the most profound heathen philosopher. It would be impossible to induce the most ignorant person in any part of the christian world, to receive and practice the religious ceremonies and rites most esteemed by the most enlightened heathens. How are these things to be accounted for? Are men, naturally more wise now than their predecessors? Many of those, who labored under a degree of ignorance to us almost incredible, respecting God: his government, and the means of securing his approbation; on other subjects discovered, that they were not less capable of deep research, than any philosopher of modern times. Our advantage over them can be attributed only to revelation.— Not only the religious rites, and the methods pursued by the wisest heathens, to appease their gods, are shocking to us; but many things advocated, and practised by those who were esteemed their most virtuous characters, were subversive of good morals and abhorrent to the mind of the weakest believer. The scriptures have raised the standard of morals. The precepts inculcated in the gospel of Christ are opposed to the sinful propensities of men, and are therefore hated by them; but all the

hard speeches which have ever been uttered against these precepts, have not had the smallest tendency to tarnish their beauty, or prove *one* of them to be unreasonable or unnecessary. *'No man ever spake as Jesus did,'* his enemies being judges. Should the ignorance and wickedness prevalent in all christian countries be thought an objection to the advantages of the gospel, or a proof of the insufficiency of the scriptures to make men wise and good; it must be confessed, that many who have the opportunity of knowing their Master's will, refuse to do it. But to have a faithful guide must certainly be considered an advantage, though numbers should refuse his guidance, and continue to wander in devious paths. To some, it is pleasant to view the light, though others close their eyes against it. It would not be thought strange, that one with his eyes closed, should stagger at noon day; but few, I suppose, would think of advancing this as a proof that no advantages result from the light of the sun. To blame the sun because a man with his eyes closed has tumbled over a precipice, would be as reasonable as to blame the scriptures because unbelievers are unlightened and unreformed. To judge fairly of the advantages of the gospel, the question to be asked is, what influence has it on those who believe and obey it?

The scriptures reveal a scheme wisely adapted to the condition of man, as a fallen guilty creature. Men in all ages and countries have manifested a scene of guilt. A variety of expedients have been adopted, and many costly offerings have been made by men to expiate their guilt; but all in vain. The accusing voice of conscience is heard even when human blood has been shed to silence its accusations. "Fools may make a mock of sin" but, it must be evident, to every reflecting mind, that the fears with which many have been perplexed, respecting the possibility of obtaining forgiveness, have not been without an ample cause. If men have indeed transgressed God's laws, who but God himself, can inform them whether a pardon can be obtained or not? Or if it can, on what terms it is attainable? Can they learn from the judgments of God,

of the numerous calamities with which mankind are visited under his providence, that he is too merciful to punish transgressors of his laws? The convinced sinner can obtain satisfactory information on this subject, only from the gospel of Christ. Here he receives the glad tidings, that God can be just and justify the sinner who believes in Jesus. Here he finds an atonement of infinite value, and discovers that the terms on which pardon and acceptance through the merits of the Saviour are attainable, are such as aptly correspond to his state of guilt and weakness. *'Believe and be saved. Ask and receive.'* Yes! The number, or aggravation of our crimes, need not prevent, nay, ought to accelerate our application to him, who *'came to seek and save the lost,'* and hath assured us, that *'him that cometh to him, he will in no wise cast out.'* The gospel reveals a scheme of GRACE; *'grace that bringeth salvation, and teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously and godly in the present world.'* Here, we not only learn what preparation is necessary that we may be admitted to partake of the inheritance of the saints; but actually experience that preparation happily begun in our souls in answer to the Saviour's prayer, *'Sanctify them through the truth, thy word is truth.'* This remedy, and this only, can reach the disordered source of our evil actions, and *'create us anew in Christ Jesus.'* Here we bid adieu to our guilty fears, and inspired by the spirit of adoption, cry *'Abba Father.'*—Through the mediation of the Son of God, we have access with confidence to the mercy seat, and are encouraged to *'come boldly to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.'* Here mercy and grace are liberally bestowed by the hand, which, for us was nailed to the accursed tree. After accompanying the christian in this near approach to God—this entrance into the holiest of all, Reader! behold for a moment the dark regions which have never yet hailed the light of revelation. See the hands of human beings reeking with the blood of their own offspring, shed to appease gods which cannot hear or save; and then say, what

gratitude is due to God, for the revelation of his will, made to us in his word.

Should any thing further, be thought necessary to enhance the value of this revelation consider the information it gives, respecting a future world. How greatly did we need information on this subject! To the eye of reason, the region beyond the grave was involved in impenetrable darkness. Ah! how dreadful to enter the grave without a guide—without direction—without hope. But O! ye Infidels, have you never seen a Christian die? Have you never heard from the faltering tongue of the humble follower of Jesus, when on the verge of life, and closing his eyes on sublunary things, the language of holy triumph, '*O! death where is thy sting. O! grave where is thy victory. Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ?*' And did you then suppose the gospel to be a contrivance of Priests to impose on the ignorant and credulous? Did you then think the word of God was unprofitable? Ah! No. Such scenes almost make infidelity itself, believe it to be '*the power of God to salvation.*' Infidels have not died thus. Hypocrisy may lead some to conceal their fears, even in death, and to assume the appearance of courage or composure. The sinner may leave the world in ignorance, and consequently without any anxiety respecting his future destiny. The christian only can rejoice that his race is run, his warfare completed, and his departure at hand; when he shall hear the plaudit of his Saviour, '*Well done good and faithful servant,*' and shall enter into the joy of his Lord.

The prospect of future felicity, and the joys which the Believer is led by the scriptures to anticipate, have a happy tendency, to support him in the pilgrimage of life, and to cheer his heart amidst all its troubles. '*To the poor the gospel is preached.*' Yes, blessed Jesus! through the influence of thy word and Spirit, the heart of the humble peasant has often been made glad—the mud-walled cottage has resounded with the songs of praise and salvation—the slave hath experienced contentment and freedom; and hath feasted on dry bread with

more lively gratitude to the giver of all good, than the wealthy sinner ever felt, when his table was loaded with the luxuries of life. Taught by thy gospel, thy saints *'have taken joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing in themselves, that they had in heaven a better and an enduring substance. They have chosen rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, having a respect to the recompence of the reward.'* Their experience hath taught them that *'thy word is profitable, for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.'* May Christians be more thankful for the inestimable advantages derived from Revelation; and may sinners beware that they receive not the grace of God, in vain. S.

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FOR THE VIRGINIA RELIGIOUS MAGAZINE.

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ON INFIDELITY, NO. IV.

I MUST beg leave to dwell on the subject of the last number a little while longer. We have seen some instances of the credulity of unbelievers. It may be useful to adduce a few more.

When the christian system was first presented to the world, every nation, of which we have any knowledge, the jews excepted, were polytheists and idolaters. This was certainly the case with the refined and learned people of Greece and Rome. And notwithstanding the subtilty and the wisdom of their celebrated sages, still they continued in gross darkness, worshipping their fabled deities with superstitions the most ridiculous, with rites the most absurd, and ceremonies the most abominable that can be conceived. So that the very temples of the gods became the abodes of the most infamous licentiousness. But when the gospel was made known unto

men, this monstrous mass of idolatry, and superstition, and wickedness tumbled in ruins, and men worshipped the One living and eternal God, who is over all blessed forever. This certainly was no trifling matter; and without doubt the gospel of Christ Jesus deserves great regard, inasmuch as it has given to man more correct and exalted notions of the character of Deity than had ever been entertained before. But more has been done than this. We are taught in the holy Scriptures a purer, and more perfect morality than ever had been before inculcated. The heathen philosophers, indeed, gave many very excellent precepts. But it may be remarked that whatever in their several systems is truly excellent coincides with the christian morality; and that whatever is defective, is a departure from it. And whoever examines with impartiality, will find that they are universally lame, and defective. They are imperfect both as to precept and motive. They are imperfect as to precept, because, in the first place, they go only to the regulation of the external conduct, without attempting to correct that, which is the source of all evil, the temper of the heart. In the second place there was an omission of some duties, which appear entirely suited to the condition of human nature, and which, when duly attended to, contribute greatly to the peace of society, such, for example, are humility, and love to our enemies. The truth is, that the moralists of antiquity generally assumed, in their systems some point as the chief good of man, on which they insisted, to the exclusion of many things of no small importance.

But there was also a defect in the motives suggested for the enforcement of their precepts. They could indeed talk finely of honour, and reputation; they could talk finely about the beauty of virtue: but these fine spun speculations are to the uncurbed, impetuous passions of men, what a mound of sand is to the swollen mountain torrent. Directly contrary to this is the morality of the gospel. Its precepts strike at the very principles of vice. *'The axe is laid at the root.'* It re-

quires us to suppress the very first risings of evil desire, to root up the very foundations of iniquity; to purify the heart, to make the tree good, and then the fruit shall be good also. And farther still; its precepts extend to every relation of life; not a case can occur, but that it is not by a command, or a prohibition. In the gospel moreover are presented to us the strongest possible motives to the right discharge of duty. Here, it is true, are no incitements to honour, no provocatives to ambition, no compromises with the weakness of human nature. But you must live as under the immediate inspection of God; you must be what you ought to be or eternal destruction is the consequence. Here is no subterfuge for hypocrisy, no cloak for the ingenuity of vice to hide itself under; but every thing is before the face of Heaven. On the other hand, to him who is faithful unto death, and who by a patient continuance in well-doing seeks for glory, honour, and immortality, eternal life is secured on the veracity of a God. Here then as motives, to a pious holy life, is proposed the favor of God, and the happiness of Heaven, and as the terror of evil doers, the wrath of God, and the horrors of everlasting despair are set before them. Where else can such motives be found to persuade men to pursue good, and avoid evil?

In addition to all this, there is presented to us in the character of Jesus Christ a pattern of perfection, which we are called upon to imitate. Here I choose to use the words of the eloquent unbeliever Rousseau. "I will confess to you farther, " that the majesty of the Scripture strikes me with admiration, " as the purity of the gospel hath its influence on my heart. " Peruse the works of our philosophers, with all their pomp " of diction, how mean, how contemptible are they, com- " pared with the Scripture! Is it possible that a book at once " so simple and sublime, should be merely the work of man? " Is it possible that the sacred personage, whose history it con- " tains should be himself a mere man? Do we find that he as- " sumed the air of an enthusiast or ambitious sectary? What " sweetness, what purity in his manners! what an affecting



“ gracefulness in his delivery ! what sublimity in his manners !  
 “ what profound wisdom in his discourses ! what presence of  
 “ mind ! what subtilty ! what truth in his replies ! how great  
 “ the command over his passions !—Where is the man ? where  
 “ the philosopher, who could so live and die without weakness,  
 “ and without ostentation ? Shall we suppose the Evangelical  
 “ history a mere fiction ? Indeed, my friend, it bears not  
 “ the marks of fiction. On the contrary, the history of So-  
 “ crates, which no body presumes to doubt, is not so well at-  
 “ tested as that of Jesus Christ. The Jewish authors were in-  
 “ capable of the diction, and strangers to the morality con-  
 “ tained in the gospels ; the marks of whose truth are so striking  
 “ and invincible, that the inventor would be a more astonish-  
 “ ing character than the hero.” I am here anticipated in the  
 conclusion which I intended to draw ; but I will just add, that  
 it may now be recollected what accounts unbelievers have in  
 all ages given of the Apostles of Christ, or what accounts  
 they have given of themselves ; and he who can believe that  
 such men by their own unassisted powers, could give such views  
 of the character of Deity, deliver such precepts of moral  
 conduct, suggest such motives for their enforcement, or pro-  
 pose for imitation such an example of perfection as the cha-  
 racter of Jesus, has a great deal more faith, (if it were of the  
 right kind) than would make him a christian.

But upon the supposition that the whole gospel scheme is a  
 gross imposture, a mere fabrication, yet there is still in it  
 something very extraordinary. That twelve obscure illiterate  
 Jews should undertake to contrive a scheme to impose upon  
 the world ; that they should lay the plan and foresee all the  
 difficulties in the way so as to avoid them ; that they should  
 go forth into various nations telling the same story, and keep-  
 ing the appearance of consistency amidst all the infinite va-  
 riety of occurrences they met with ; that in all the exami-  
 nations and counter-examinations before the civil magistrate,  
 they still should never contradict each other ; that unallured by

rewards and unterrified by death in all its most dreadful forms they should never confess the imposture; in short that they should have laid the plan with such wonderful ingenuity and foresight, and have persevered in it with such inflexible resolution as to have succeeded in their scheme; that they should have imposed not only on ignorant barbarians, but on the most learned, the most acute and ingenious people, on people whom even the enlightened moderns revere for their genius and learning; that on such as these, an imposture should be imposed, and so rivetted, as to continue to this day; that it should still continue among the most enlightened nations of the world, while the ignorant and barbarous have long ago rejected it; and that now, such was the astonishing reach of thought in these men, that even now many of the most learned, most acute, most profound, and sagacious men, should be imposed upon, so as firmly to believe this imposture, and build their best hopes, and rest their souls salvation upon it: and still farther, that they should defend it against the attacks of infidels, and find in the very imposture itself, arguments which have perpetually puzzled and confounded them; that obscure illiterate fishermen should contrive a scheme of imposture which has completely imposed upon such men, as Bacon and Boyle and Newton and Locke and Campbell and Reid and Jones, is I think, as extraordinary as any thing we read of in the history of the world; and he who believes this—I will not pretend to say what he would not believe.

And what is not a little strange too, is, that this imposture, which has established itself against the opposition of the world, which has thus imposed upon the wisest, the best, the most illustrious men in the world, that this, should be so gross and silly, that a child could detect it; that it should be such a clumsy story, that none but an easy credulous fool could believe it, I will leave it to any man's reason, if this be not strange, passing strange! wonderful and passing wonderful! For my own part, christian as I am, *Incredulus Odi*, I hate such incredible stories, and rest myself on the plain simple truths of christianity.

## INFANT BAPTISM, No. II.

IN a former number, some difficulties were proposed which need to be explained, and some facts stated, which remain to be accounted for, upon supposition that the baptism of infants is not authorised by scripture; but the attention of the reader, was in no degree turned to a consideration of the evidence, which may be derived from that infallible source, either for or against the practice. I think, however, that a candid inquirer after truth, upon being made acquainted with the things already stated, would expect to find in the scriptures, the doctrine of infant baptism, either expressly taught, or clearly deducible from principles there established. And if upon examination, he should find that it received no countenance from the sacred writings, he could not be otherwise than surprized and perplexed, at finding a divine ordinance, in so short a time completely blotted out of existence, as Christian baptism must have been, upon this supposition. But if after a careful investigation of the subject, the arguments from scripture on each side, should appear to be pretty well balanced, the considerations already brought into view, would throw so heavy a weight of probability into the scale of infant-baptism, that he would find it difficult to resist the conviction, that it was an Apostolical practice.

Let us suppose then, such a person to open the bible, with a sincere desire to find the truth upon this subject. What would be the result of his inquiry? He would not be able, I confess, to lay his finger on any text, which explicitly declares, that infants ought to be baptized; nor would he be able to point to any example of the practice so clear, as to admit of no dispute. But he would observe the following things, which all taken together, would produce a strong persuasion, that this was no invention of men.

1. That, by the appointment of God, infants had once been the subjects of a religious rite—Whether they partook of the passover is not evident, but that they were circumcised by the direction of the Almighty is certain; and that circumcision was a religious ceremony, is equally certain. If any person dispute it, let him form a definition of a religious rite, which will include baptism, and exclude circumcision, and I will give up the argument. It was appointed by the Almighty in a solemn manner—It was the *sign* of a covenant, which required obedience on the part of man, and promised the most important spiritual, as well as temporal blessings, on the part of God. It was sanctioned by an awful threatening, and had a reference to the moral, or spiritual qualities of the heart. If all these things will not constitute a religious rite, then in vain shall we look for one in the Old or New Testament. And denominate it as you please, it will fall under the same class with baptism. The observation of this fact, obviates an objection, which is apt to occur, and is often urged, that infants are incapable of being the subjects of such an institution as baptism: for what the wisdom of God has seen proper and fit in one case, may be proper in a similar case.

2. But, what is of more importance, he would observe, that these two rites, have a remarkable resemblance, in their use, and meaning. They were both appointed to be initiating rites. If a stranger wished to be incorporated with the Israel of God, and to worship him in the peculiar ordinances of the Mosaic law, such as the passover; he was directed to be in the first place circumcised, with all the males of his household, and then he was permitted to eat of the paschal lamb, and join in all the other ritual services of that dispensation, just in the same manner as if he had been born in the land. And this rule was strictly followed, in all cases, where profelytes were received by the Jewish church—And we know that baptism is the regular door of entrance into the Christian church. Whoever is baptized, in the name of Christ, '*puts on Christ.*' He becomes regularly & formally a member of the Catholic church.

Concerning this we have no dispute with the Baptists—We are all agreed. They do, however, sometimes pretend, in order to interrupt the analogy here mentioned, that circumcision was not an initiating ordinance to the Israelitish church; and say, that all the descendants of Abram were born members of that church, and therefore could not be introduced by any rite; but this is scarcely worthy of an answer; for we might say the same of the children of christian parents. The truth is that a connexion with any society may be considered twofold, virtual, and formal, or real, and visible. When a person possesses the qualifications required by the constitution of any society, and has obtained from the proper authority, liberty of admission, he is virtually a member of that society; but he may have to pass through some established ceremonies, before he can be publicly recognized as one of the body. In this respect the Jewish and Christian churches are perfectly similar.

But another point of resemblance, between these rites is, that they both are external signs, of the same internal state, or condition of the heart. They are not *arbitrary* institutions, but significant; and the lesson emblematically inculcated by both is the same, the unclean, and depraved natural condition of their subjects, and the necessity, of a *new heart*, by the regeneration of the Holy Spirit. It is not more evident from the New Testament, that baptism represents our sanctification from an impure state, than it is from the Old, that circumcision was a sign of the putting away of the hard and stony heart, and receiving a new temper. In the next place, it would readily occur to an impartial observer, that in adults, the qualifications required, in order to a participation of each of these institutions, were the same. Any Heathen, who made application to be connected with the congregation of Israel, by receiving circumcision, did by this very act profess, that he renounced his false Gods, and idolatrous worship—that he believed in the God of Israel, and was willing to be subject to the Mosaic law; and there is no doubt but what this profession was publicly and

formally made before admission. Upon any other terms, it would have been absurd to have received proselytes. And it is evident, that the terms of admission to baptism, in adults, are a profession, of the renunciation of our former sins—of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ—and the discovery of a disposition to obey the precepts of the gospel. I know it will be asserted, that the qualifications requisite in order to admission to circumcision and baptism were widely different, but to this assertion, I will oppose a positive denial, which will be sufficient until some proof of the opinion is adduced. I acknowledge, that our obligations to be holy, increase with increasing light and privileges, so that more is required of those who live under the clear light of the gospel, than was of those who enjoyed the obscurer light of the law. But the God of Abram and Moses, is the Christian's God, and did as certainly require faith and repentance, in all who engaged in his service, as he does now—The very same moral, and spiritual qualifications were required in church-members, under the old, that are now under the new dispensation. This is evident, because a holy God, always must have required holiness, in his worshippers. It would be absurd to suppose, that he had established any institution, in attendance upon which, neither faith, nor obedience *of heart*, were required. But, it is pretended, that he did not make these moral qualities, conditions of admission to circumcision, as he has done to baptism. This is much more easily said than proved. I have not been able to find a single reason in support of the opinion. The scriptures furnish no example of any person being rejected from either of these ordinances who made application for them; and although a pious temper was requisite to an acceptable attendance upon both of them, it does not appear that God has ever yet erected upon earth, an inquisitorial court, to determine who was in possession of this qualification. I believe, notwithstanding all the attempts of men to usurp this prerogative, he has reserved the knowledge of the hearts of men, to himself. The Baptist church requires every candidate for admission, publicly to relate the

particular dealings of the Almighty with his soul, and upon hearing this narrative, the whole society undertakes to judge, whether he be a converted person, or not; and what is very unaccountable, if the society consist of an hundred persons, and ninety and nine should be in favor of the candidate, and only one opposed to him, he is rejected, in opposition to the opinion of this large majority. I have indeed, heard, that some churches are receding from this absurd practice, but I believe it is still retained by the great body of the Baptists. But notwithstanding all these precautions, hypocrites find as easy access into their church, as into any other; and as many of them make the validity of baptism, to depend on the sincerity of the faith of the subject, when any person who has been received into the church, falls into gross, and long continued immoralities, and is afterwards reclaimed, they are greatly at a loss how to proceed, some insist that the person should be re-baptized, (a thing which has been done in several instances) but others more correctly think, that this would be giving just cause for the reproach of anabaptism, under which, the sect had so long laboured.

Another thing, which is worthy of observation, with regard to circumcision, is, that infants who were the subjects of it, were as much bound to keep the whole Mosaic law, as if they had personally consented to come under these obligations, which proves, that God has appointed parents to act for their children, in things spiritual as well as temporal; and that by their act they are bound as much as they would be by their own.

But it will be said, that in some particulars, the analogy between these rites, does not hold, because circumcision was administered only to males, and was restricted to the eighth day. If I were pleading for a complete substitution of the one in the place of the other, this remark would deserve some notice, but as I am only contending for a resemblance in all important points between the two ordinances, these circumstan-

tial differences will have no effect in destroying the analogy already exhibited.

Now, what would our sincere inquirer after truth conclude, with these observations before his mind? Not, that infant baptism was certainly a divine appointment. The premises are not sufficient to bear the weight of this conclusion. But it may be safely asserted, that a candid consideration of the aforesaid facts, would remove some of the principal objections which are apt to occur against infant baptism, and would prepare the mind more fully to expect to find this doctrine in the New Testament.

Let us then follow him, while he passes on to an examination of this part of the sacred volume! by the dictates of which, the question must be ultimately decided.

The first thing, which would be apt to strike the attention of an intelligent observer, is, the manner in which baptism is mentioned by the Evangelists. They do not speak of it, as a new and strange rite just now introduced, but the history proceeds, as if the thing was well understood by the people. No description is given of the particular mode of performing the ceremony, nor any clear information of the meaning of the ordinance. But we are briefly informed, that, '*In those days came John the Baptizer;—And the people went out, and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.*' And when the Pharisees, and Scribes, sent a deputation to enquire of John who he was, no question was proposed respecting the nature and use of this ceremony, which, if it had been a novel thing, we may expect would have been done; but upon his denying that he was the Messiah, or any one of the ancient Prophets, they simply asked, why then baptizest thou? which seems to imply, that they were well acquainted with this rite, but could not see the reason of his using it. All this however, might pass for conjecture, did not the Jewish writers inform us, that baptism had been long in use in their nation, before this period, and that it was constantly administered to all proselytes to their religion, whether male or female, adults, or



infants. And their testimony on this point, has peculiar weight, because their rancorous hatred to the christians, was so great, that they never would have pretended, that their fore-fathers practised baptism, the distinguishing badge of christianity, had it not been a fact; and especially when it is considered, that the Jews through hatred to the christians, altered many of their sentiments and modes of worship, purposely, that there might be no resemblance between them. Moreover, this fact is not mentioned slightly, but repeated frequently in their most ancient and authentic books; and the circumstances of administration minutely detailed. This accounts in a satisfactory manner, for the brevity, with which this subject is treated in the New Testament; for the Scriptures never enter into particular explanations of those things, which were well understood, at the time when *they* were written, and by the persons to whom they were originally directed; and the want of knowledge then possessed, is one principal source of *their* obscurity to us.

Provided the fact of Jewish baptism be granted, I consider it of little importance, how it came into use. It might have been adopted, after the return of the Jews from their Babylonish captivity, under the direction of Ezra, as it is commonly thought, the worship of the Synagogue was, which is equally unnoticed in the scriptures of the Old Testament; and yet was sanctioned by the constant attendance, and ministry of our blessed Saviour and his Apostles; and was made the pattern according to which, the primitive government of the christian church, was regulated. But on the other hand, if both these things crept into use, without divine authority, they might have been retained, and established by the author of christianity, as well as to appoint rites and ceremonies entirely new.

Let the sincere inquirer then, be permitted to take this fact along with him, whilst he reads the commission, which Christ gave to his apostles, just before his ascension; which is the

true origin of that baptism, which peculiarly belongs to the christian church. For as to the baptism of John, and of the disciples, before the resurrection, though there can be no reasonable doubt, but what the rite itself was the same, yet the use was entirely different. The Baptists greatly err, when they consider their baptism as being derived from John, for his was properly Jewish baptism. It could not introduce members into the christian church, before it had a separate existence, and even before Christ had entered on his public ministry. If any doubt remained on this subject, I think the re-baptization of the disciples of John, mentioned in the sixth chap. of the Acts would be sufficient to dispel it. Then I say, let the honest inquirer read Matt. xxviii, 19—and what will he think? But let him read it in the original, for our translation does not express the true meaning of the word *mathetensate*, rendered *teach*, but properly signifies *disciple*, or proselyte. This alteration is not made to serve a particular purpose, nor does it rest upon the footing of private criticism, but has received the sanction of all Biblical critics of any note, who have delivered an opinion, and the alteration has been made in all new translations of the passage, and whenever a new translation of the bible (which already is needed) is made for public use, the aforesaid interpretation will no doubt be given to this word. But it is strenuously contended, that even according to this translation, no advantage is obtained, for the word is derived from *manthano* to teach, and must signify the forming of a disciple by teaching; and that infants as they cannot be taught, cannot become disciples. To which I answer, that although there is a near affinity, between making a disciple of a person, and teaching him, yet there is a clear distinction, as well understood in the common practice of life, as among critics. A disciple is made, in order to be taught. The word precisely expresses the forming of the relation, between a master and scholar, which always takes place before any lesson is given. Amongst men, there are two methods of forming this relation. The one, where a person being of sufficient age,

voluntarily engages himself to a teacher; the other, when parents or guardians enter children, who are too young to act for themselves, under the care of a teacher. And there is no absurdity, in supposing an infant yet too young to be taught, provided with a teacher, who shall give it lessons, as soon as it becomes capable of receiving them, as a man may employ a person to instruct all his children, as fast as they become capable of receiving information; and in that case, they are all his disciples, even before they have learned any thing. This double method of making disciples; takes place in the church of Christ.—The gospel is preached to adults. They are convinced that Christ is the Son of God, the true Messiah, and Saviour of the world. They profess their faith in him, and become his disciples formally by receiving baptism, which is appointed to be a sign of this relation between the Great teacher of the church, and his disciples: But not contented with this, they put all the persons, for whom they have a right to act under his tuition also, and have the act ratified by the administration of baptism to each person, thus given up to Christ, as his disciple. And wherein, is the impropriety of devoting infants to the service of God, as soon as they are born? Parents often bind their children to trades, or professions, which they hope will be useful to them; and why not bind them from their birth in *solemn articles* to the God that made them, and redeemed them? Who will undertake to limit the prophetic office of Christ, and say that his spirit can have no access to the soul of an infant? At any rate, infants soon become capable of instruction, and whose disciples should they be rather than Christ's? who has said, '*Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.*'

It moreover appears, that infants are called disciples in Acts xv. 10—'*Why tempt ye God to put a yoke on the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers, nor we were able to bear.*'

The matter then appears to stand thus: The disciples of our Lord, to whom the commission was given, had been all

brought up in the Jewish religion, and were habituated to the sentiments, and customs which prevailed at that time among the Jews. They knew, that male infants had been circumcised from the origin of their nation, and religion; and that proselytes, not only had their males circumcised, but were all baptized, old and young, as a sign of their purification from their former pollutions. With this knowledge, they hear their Master say, 'Go proselyte all nations, baptizing them,' &c.—What else could they think, but that this business was to be conducted as usual, by receiving, and baptizing whole families? And, it is certain, that a nation can be proselyted to a religion, in no other way, than by families, for if adults alone, are made disciples, the great majority of a nation are left out. If our Saviour had intended, to introduce a new method of making proselytes, certainly he would have considered it necessary to give particular directions to those on the subject, who from infancy, had been accustomed to a different mode. But no such instructions are to be found, either in the commission, or any where else. It is therefore to be presumed, that he intended to make no alteration, in this matter. It will not do for a Baptist to say, that he might have given directions which were never recorded, for this would be a complete renunciation of a principle, tenaciously held, that the scriptures are full, and plain in all matters of this kind. It may be said, that although the disciples might be disposed, from *the prejudices of their education*, to give this interpretation to the commission; yet this does not prove, that it was our Saviour's meaning. To which I answer, Words, are always used to convey ideas, and the speaker who wishes to be understood, must have respect to their common use, and especially to the sense in which he knows his hearers have been accustomed to receive them. If therefore Christ's command, to proselyte, and baptize all nations, would naturally be understood by the Apostles as a direction to receive every family, of every nation, the head of which professed faith, then this ought to be admitted as the true interpretation of the words.

A paraphrase of the commission, in conformity to the above observations, would run thus—"I now send you forth, to make profelytes of all nations, who shall be willing to receive my religion. When any person is brought over, to believe in my name, consider his household as profelytes also, and baptize them accordingly, both male and female, old and young; as you have been accustomed to see done, when the head of a family was received into the Jewish religion; and as soon as you have made any disciples to my religion, proceed to teach them all that I have commanded you, and let those who are in a state of infancy be brought up in *'the nurture and admonition of the Lord.'*" In this paraphrase, those things only are supplied, which would naturally and readily occur to the Apostles, from the ideas which they had formed, and the principles in which they had been educated. But if we adopt the construction of the Baptists, then we must supply such ideas, to complete the sense, as would have been quite foreign to all the notions of the disciples, and contrary to every usage of their nation.—The paraphrase expressing the full sense, upon these principles, would be something like the following, "Go, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them, &c. but the practice of receiving whole households upon the conversion of the head, which has been heretofore common, is now to be laid aside, and no person is to be baptized, or admitted into the church, but upon his or her personal faith; for the constitution of the new church, which I am about to establish, is essentially different from that of the old." Now, it is very evident, that all these things ought to have been expressed, if this was intended to be the meaning of the commission. For how otherwise could a disciple of our Saviour, educated in the Jewish religion, know, when he was directed to profelyte and baptize *all nations*, that he was not to proceed as usual, by admitting whole families as fast as they would offer themselves?

If we are required, to shew our authority for the baptism of infants, I will produce this commission, by which we are au-

thorized to administer this ordinance to *all nations*—to the whole race of human beings, provided we can bring them under the care and tuition of the church. Neither old men, nor young, male nor female, adults nor infants, are here specified; but all these descriptions of persons fall under the general phrase—*all nations*, which taken in its proper meaning, certainly includes the whole human race; and in the present connexion, has but one limitation, and that is that the person baptized, must be capable of being a disciple, or profelyte. This proposition then is deducible, from the above passage of scripture ‘*That all human beings who can be made disciples, are immediately to be baptised.*’ But we have proved that infants, were considered as profelytes among the Jews, and that they may be made disciples to Christ by the act of their parents, therefore it is fair and logical to conclude, that such infants as have professing parents, are commanded to be baptized.

If it shall still be urged, that infants ought to be particularly mentioned. I ask, why not other classes of the human race also—Suppose I were to demand an express precept, directing the baptism of kings and other civil rulers, who could produce one? Indeed the whole sect of Baptists, who sprung up just after the reformation, refused to receive any person into their communion who held a civil office, but I cannot affirm that it was for the want of an express precept. The Baptists, of the present day, however, are not so scrupulous, for they are well pleased to fill their ranks with men in civil offices, and their members often aspire to places of power and trust. The answer then, which they would return to the question proposed, would be, that all descriptions of men are included in the command, provided they will believe in the Lord Jesus. And so we when urged to produce proof of infant baptism, say that *they* are likewise included in the command, provided we can make profelytes or disciples of them. The whole then turns upon this single point, were children considered in the light of profelytes, who were found in the family of a converted man,

under the Jewish dispensation? And does the language of scripture, as well as common language, permit them to be called disciples? To these questions an answer has been already given, satisfactory we hope, to the candid inquirer after truth.

I will conclude this number with one single inference from what has been said, and that is this: that it is more incumbent on the Baptists to produce a positive precept, forbidding the practice of infant baptism, than it is upon the Pedobaptists, to shew one prescribing it; because every thing in the former dispensation would lead to the opinion, that whatever rite should be instituted as introductory to the the christian church, would include infants; especially when it was understood, that in the new dispensation the door of admission to profelytes was to be greatly enlarged.

The opinion which has been most inimical to infant baptism is, that the Christian church differed from the Jewish, in this important respect, that it was intended to consist of a collection of sincere believers, whereas the other embraced a whole nation, without regard to the moral characters of its members. But this opinion is totally unsupported by scripture, as any one may see who carefully examines the subject. Q

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FOR THE VIRGINIA RELIGIOUS MAGAZINE.

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### PHILANDER TO POLITUS, LETTER II.

SIR,

TO exhibit, in its full extent the tendency of religion to promote the civil, domestic, and personal happiness of mankind, is a theme for many volumes. The present discussion must be much more limited. I shall confine my reflections chiefly to that great branch of all true religion called piety, and to that happiness which it confers on its possessor, considered in its private and individual capacity. The field is still too

extensive to be minutely explored. I must content myself with selecting a few of the many points of view, in which the subject invites consideration. And as this is necessary, so I promise myself it will be sufficient. The truth of any proposition does not depend on the number, but on the strength of the arguments by which it is supported. And should I happily succeed in convincing you, that piety does indeed greatly promote even the present happiness of its possessor, I am sure you will readily assent to the truth of the more general assertion, which is the occasion of these letters.

It is needful here, that I should give you some account of the nature of true piety. And this I will endeavor to do; not so much for the sake of method, as to guard your mind against the many wild and absurd notions on this subject which prevail in the world, and even among professing Christians.

By piety, in general, I understand all those affections of the heart which God has required us to exercise toward himself as their direct object. We might include all the rational and scriptural expressions of those affections by external actions: but to enlarge on these is not necessary to our present purpose.

Pious affections may with sufficient propriety be considered under three great heads; love to God, fear of God, and trust in God—It may be true, as some have asserted, that all pious affections are but the varied exercises of love. However, I think it will contribute to clearness of conception to consider them distinctly according to the arrangement I have adopted.

Love to God, as distinguished from fear and trust, is still a complex affection of the soul. But its nature is not difficult to be investigated. It includes cordial esteem of the character of God, desire of his favour, gratitude for his mercies, and joy in his infinite excellency and happiness. The pious man finds pleasure in studying the perfections of God. He sees many traces of divine wisdom, power and goodness in the works of creation. All things within him and around him appear to be full of God. But the moral perfections, which constitute e-



minently what the Scriptures call *the glory of God*, are most fully displayed in the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Apostle expresses this idea in the following emphatical and happy language. *God who caused the light to shine out of darkness hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.* 2 Cor. iv. 6. It is in the gospel of Christ that God has exhibited his boundless mercy to rebellious man, in the most perfect consistency with his spotless holiness and justice: indeed these attributes wonderfully illustrate, and, as it were, exalt each other in the cross of our Redeemer. *Mercy and truth here meet together; righteousness and peace kiss each other* Psal. lxxxv. 10. While angels look with sacred wonder on this display of divine glory, and feel it too great for their full comprehension, the weakest Christian sees in it so much of God as to inspire him with the highest approbation, esteem and complacency: His heart is inflamed with desire to obtain more and more knowledge of God, to be transformed into his likeness to enjoy his favour, or as it is called in scripture, *his presence and the light of his Countenance.* Feeling his own unworthiness, and perpetually excited to contemplate the goodness and mercy of God by innumerable benefits, his heart is habitually filled with gratitude to the great Giver of all good; and he cheerfully and unreservedly devotes himself to the service of his heavenly Benefactor. The love of God and of Christ in saving him from eternal misery, the just reward of his sins, and making him an heir of everlasting happiness, sweetly and powerfully constrains him to press forward, amidst every difficulty, in obedience to all the commandments of God.

Finally, though he knows that the glory and felicity of God are absolutely infinite and cannot be increased, and therefore that he cannot be profitable to God as a man may be to his neighbor, yet he rejoices that *the Lord reigns*, that he is independantly, infinitely and unchargeably happy in himself. *God over all blessed for ever.* If such are indeed the sentiments and feelings which constitute genuine love to God, is

there any thing more proper for the nature and circumstances of man than to love God with supreme devotion? Can any thing be conceived more reasonable, than that first and great commandment, *thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind?* Mat. xxii. 37.

The second great branch of piety is the fear of God. By this is not to be understood that dreadful apprehension of the wrath of God which the most wicked of men often feel, and which devils suffer in a still higher degree. It is of this terrible expectation of divine vengeance that the Apostle speaks when he declares that *there is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear; because fear hath torment.* 1 John iv. 18. But by that fear of God which the wise man calls *the beginning of wisdom*, and which is so repeatedly mentioned in the scriptures as a sure characteristic of the children of God, I understand a profound awe and veneration, produced by a view of the infinite purity, greatness and majesty of the divine nature. It has often been called filial fear, to distinguish it from the slavish terror of the wicked above mentioned, and because it is well and easily illustrated by the reverence of a dutiful child to a worthy and indulgent parent. This humble reverence of God is intimately connected with love to him: they begin, increase, and will be perfected together. They mutually strengthen each other as guards against sin and motives to holy obedience. The pious mind, habitually impressed with the presence and awful purity of God, feels a certain sacred delicacy of incurring his displeasure, and trembles at the thought of his frown, though strongly confident of his unchangeable love and protection—And here I ask again, is there any thing more perfectly just and reasonable than the fear of God? *Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? For thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee.* Rev. xv. 4.

The third branch of piety is trust in God. I need not tell you that the holy scriptures abundantly enjoin trust in God as an universal duty, and celebrate it as a most precious privilege.

To comply gratefully with this injunction is the sure result of a true and impressive acquaintance with our guilt, helplessness and general insufficiency for our own preservation and happiness; and with that fullness of divine goodness, wisdom, power and faithfulness which render God the proper object of our unlimited confidence. The pious man feels his dependence upon God for every blessing of life, and for life itself. He feels his need of boundless mercy to blot out his sins, to purify his nature, to guard him against his spiritual foes, to give him the victory over death, to redeem him from the power of the grave, and to receive him to a blessed immortality. For all his wants he sees a most glorious provision in the perfections and promises of God. In the kind and wise providence of his heavenly Father he finds a complete attention to his minutest wants and interests. In the gospel he is freely invited to trust in the blood of a crucified Saviour, which is abundantly effectual to procure pardon and peace with God by destroying all his guilt. In the promise of the Spirit and grace of his exalted Redeemer he finds a most animating assurance of deliverance from the power of sin, and from all the malice and power of his adversaries. The gospel affords the most perfect antidote to the fear of death, the most unfailing certainty of a resurrection from the grave, and participation in that *'fullness of joy,'* those inconceivable *'pleasures which are at God's right hand forevermore.'* In these views, the Christian habitually, cheerfully, and unreservedly, commits himself, soul and body, with all his interest, temporal and eternal, to the hands of a faithful and almighty God. Here are no suspicions, as in earthly friendships, of insincerity, ignorance, weakness or mutability on the part of God, in whom he trusts. The Christian *'knows whom he has believed.'* And his joyful language is that of the royal Psalmist. *'The Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee.'*—Psal. lxxxiv. 11, 12.

Such is the outline of Christian piety. The representation is indeed a faint one ; but not destitute, I trust, of the features of the original. You will at once perceive its vast difference from that cold and fruitless formality with which some who vainly call themselves Christians, presume to approach God, *'while their hearts are far from him.* And you will as readily see, on the other hand, how perfectly unlike it is to that ignorant, irreverent, and most disgusting phrensy of passions and behavior, which many in our day account the very perfection of divine love. In one word, true piety is the lively exercise of those generous and manly affections of the heart which most rationally correspond to the infinite perfection of God, and the several awful and endearing relations which subsist between him and his people.

The way is now open to proceed to the direct proof of the position you have called me to defend. This I design to do in my next letter. In the mean while I request your serious consideration of what I have already written ; and am, Sir, &c.

PHILANDER.

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FOR THE VIRGINIA RELIGIOUS MAGAZINE.

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ON DUELLING.

VENTOSUS lost his election to an important public office, principally through the exertions made against him, and in favour of another candidate by Sophron, a gentleman high in the esteem of his fellow-citizens, for integrity and patriotism.—Soon after this event, the following correspondence took place.

To SOPHRON,

SIR,

THE wounds which you have inflicted on my character are not to be quietly borne. You understand the laws of ho-

nour applicable to such occasions; and I take it for granted, that you will not refuse to give me the satisfaction of a gentleman. My friend who delivers this, is instructed to make the necessary arrangements respecting time, place, &c. I am, &c.

VENTOSUS.

TO VENTOSUS,

SIR,

I ACKNOWLEDGE the receipt of your letter. On a review of my conduct towards you, of which you complain, I am perfectly satisfied that I have done you no injury. In becoming a candidate for public office, you necessarily proposed your character as an object of public investigation. I opposed your election earnestly; from no motives of private animosity, but purely from a regard to the welfare of my country. I said nothing of you but what it was my duty to say, what I knew to be true, and am ready to support before all the world.

For this conduct you require me to meet you in the field of death. I am not ignorant of the *laws of honour* to which you allude. On the impiety, injustice, and absurdity of those laws, I would willingly reason with you; but am afraid your mind is not at present in a situation to attend to reason on this subject. The time is coming when you will view it in a more correct light. In the mean while, as I have not the least right nor inclination to destroy your life, and as you have no right to an opportunity of destroying mine, I have no hesitation in refusing absolutely to comply with your request.

As to consequences, should you assault my person, be assured that I will defend myself, as against a ruffian.—Should you proclaim me a coward, none to whom I am well known will believe you. And were it otherwise, I am not ashamed to say, though I pretend not to be altogether indifferent to the esteem of mankind, that I value the approbation of God and of my own conscience, infinitely more than the applause of those who support the murderous laws of false honour. I am, &c.

SOPHRON.

VENTOSUS published these letters, with a scurrilous comment, in which he declared Sophron to be a villain and a coward. Every one knew Sophron too well to believe these charges, especially on such an accusation. His reputation had been long established; and the character of his boasting enemy was by this time very well known, and generally despised. The falshood of the charge of cowardice was glaringly manifest, as it was a notorious fact, that Sophron had repeatedly and gloriously hazarded his life in the defence of his country. A few worthy men openly applauded his conduct in refusing the challenge. But such is the tyrannical power of custom and fashion, that many expressed every where their surprise, and mortification at the proof Sophron had exhibited *of his not being a man of honour.*

Not long afterward, Sophron fell into company with a number of gentlemen of his acquaintance. They behaved towards evidently him with less cordiality and respect than formerly; and in a way between jest and earnest rallied him without mercy for his refusal to fight Ventofus. Sophron had prepared his mind for such an attack, and bore it with patience. At length, when they had sufficiently exhausted the arrows of their ridicule, he said, I know the world too well, gentlemen, to be greatly surpris'd at the entertainment which you have just now given yourselves at my expence. But I am persuaded you will not deny me a very reasonable request. It is that you will permit me to make my defence before you, as candid judges, of that conduct which you have so loudly condemned, and by which I have apparently lost your esteem. To this they readily agreed, and Sophron proceeded:

Our lives are the gift of God, and he has a sovereign right to direct their disposal. He has forbidden us, under the most tremendous sanctions, unjustly to invade the life of our neighbour, or wantonly to throw away our own. Even to hate a brother, God has pronounced to be no less than murder; and the penalty (let those tremble whom it concerns) is eternal damnation. Here the gentlemen began to look very serious.

Sophron went on. Can man make null the laws of the Almighty? Can principles dictated and supported by the most malignant passions of our depraved nature, justify the impiety of trampling upon the laws of God, and the folly of plunging ourselves into everlasting misery? Besides, my country, and my family—

Sophron was interrupted as he began this sentence by a murmur raised mostly by the younger part of the company; in which the expressions, weak superstition, foolish scruples, and idle evasion, were distinctly heard. Gentlemen, said Sophron, you promised to hear me and to judge candidly. I pardon this interruption. But is there one of you who will, after a moment's reflection, assert that the exclamations I have just heard, are consistent with reason and truth? Are they not the mere ebullitions of prejudice, and the most indefensible passions? Seriously consult your own bosoms, and give your answer. The murmurers were abashed, and with a visible impression of shame and remorse on their countenances, continued silent.

I intended, resumed Sophron, to speak of the claims which my country and my family have on my life and services. But to spare your patience, I will reduce the matter to a short issue. Suppose one of you had gone to a tribunal, to demand justice against a man whom you believed to have injured you; what would you think of the judge if he ordered that the accused and yourself should cast lots which of you should lose his head by the hands of the executioner?

The company started, and exclaimed with looks of horror, who ever heard of so monstrous a decision? But what has this to do with the present subject?

You yourselves, replied Sophron, are that unjust, that monstrous judge, Ventofus asserts that I have injured him; the charge is either true or false. I must observe, by the way, that your laws of honour are wretchedly defective in adjusting punishments to crimes; as they indiscriminately require capital punishment for every crime which they recognize. But

suppose I have injured Ventofus, and to a degree, for which my life would be no more than a just atonement. Why do you enjoin it on him, under the penalty of perpetual disgrace, to cast lots with me for our lives? For the avowed object of a challenge is to bring us to the field of blood upon equal ground; where it is as likely that I shall crown the former injury by taking his life, as that he shall obtain satisfaction for it by taking mine. Yet this is called *giving him the satisfaction of a gentleman!* But suppose I have done him no injury, why do you require me, under the same rigorous penalty, to put my life at hazard? where is the justice of loading me with infamy for refusing the combat, in which I must either destroy a man who has never injured me, or make myself a sacrifice to his rash and unreasonable thirst of revenge for a crime which exists only in his own heated imagination?

After a short pause, the gentlemen acknowledged this reasoning to be unanswerable. But one of them presently observed, that there are often injuries committed for which the laws of the land afford no redress. And how, said he, shall a gentleman in such cases obtain satisfaction? Injuries of this kind, replied Sophron, are much fewer and smaller than is commonly supposed. As far as there is a real necessity, let the proper laws be enacted for redress, and tribunals established to execute them. Let it be remembered also, that it is our duty to forgive injuries: and the good man knows that this affords a satisfaction unspeakably greater than that of revenging them.

But, exclaimed an ardent young gentleman, who can bear to be pointed at with the finger of scorn, as a poltron, and made the butt of ridicule in every polite company? It is intolerable. It is indeed not pleasant, replied Sophron; but we are answerable at a higher tribunal than that of polite company, the tribunal of God and our own conscience. Let us practise true magnanimity by despising the absurd prejudices and impious maxims of polite murderers and their adherents. And let the friends of religion, morals, humanity



and social order, unite in vigorous and persevering exertions for the utter abolition of this monstrous system. This, I am happy to find, they are now actually doing; and I feel a cheering hope, that their benevolent labours will in time be crowned with complete success.

PHILANDER.

FOR THE VIRGINIA RELIGIOUS MAGAZINE.

ORIGINAL LETTERS.

LETTER 3.

January 23, 1785.

*My Friend,*

KNOWING how apt I am to transgress the bounds of moderation in the length of my letters, I have taken a little piece of paper to night; besides I have but a little piece of a candle, so that I should not have light to finish a long letter.

We have again had the privilege of attending sermon to-day. The house was very much crowded. The text was in Hosea x. 12. The preacher run a comparison between an uncultivated field and the human heart in its natural state. He explained what was meant by breaking up the fallow-ground, and other metaphorical parts of the text. Then he shewed which was the most proper time for engaging in such a work; and concluded by offering some motives to entice us not to neglect it any longer. The whole discourse was delivered with animation, and the observations appeared eminently calculated to convict the conscience and move the passions, as well as to inform the judgment. But it was not attended with that visible effect which appeared last Sunday.—How are we distinguished from many parts of Virginia to have such an able minister settled amongst us, whose business and delight it is to cultivate the soul that it may not be unfruitful. Certainly if we knew

how to estimate our mercies properly, we should esteem none more highly than a faithful ministry. A famine of bread and of water would be deplorable calamities, but a famine of the word of God would be a greater curse. The one would destroy our bodies, but the other would leave our souls to perish for the lack of divine knowledge. But alas! what are all the efforts of ministers, and all the ordinances of the Gospel, without the divine assistance—unless God shall be pleased to water the seed sown with his grace?

But, my friend, would it not be our interest to seek after this grace? What can have infatuated our minds to such a degree that we should postpone, or be trifling about that which we know must be done? We must become truly religious, or we must be miserable for ever. When I look back on my past life, and reflect how unprofitably I have spent it; how much time I have entirely lost that might have been so easily employed in seeking the salvation of my soul; how many remarkable providences I have experienced, and how unthankful I have been for them all; my heart feels ready to burst, and I can hardly see to write for tears. I am sure it would not deprive us of one *real* enjoyment, to be religious: on the contrary, it would preserve us from many uneasy hours, which we suffer from the remorse of conscience, on account of a wicked life. God made us reasonable and immortal creatures for some important end. The greatest we know of is to serve him on earth, that we may be prepared for enjoying him in heaven.—Let us not put off so great a work any longer. We may be in earnest if we will. We are now young, cheerful and vigorous, therefore it is the most proper time to engage in a work of so great importance. If we could believe that it was now the most proper time, we should immediately engage in it; for it is natural for mankind to pursue that which appears to them most proper and agreeable at the present. Examine your mind and see if this last sentiment is not the truth.

My paper and candle admonish me to bid you good night.

Yours, Q

April 15, 1780.

*My Friend,*

THE pleasure of seeing your honored parents to-day, and the reception of your letter, so strongly revived the remembrance of you in my mind, that I should do violence to my own feelings, were I not to endeavour to make you some return for your favour.

With the prospects I have before me, and in which I expect to be an actor to-morrow, I cannot allow myself to attempt entertaining you with any thing diverting, even if I were capable. I would rather endeavour to direct my own thoughts and your's to the Lord Jesus Christ, whose dying love I am on the eve of commemorating. In him we behold the most wonderful object that ever was exhibited to the world; God manifest in the flesh, the most encouraging that ever was displayed to guilty but repenting sinners; and the fullest of consolation to the humble and pious soul. In him also is represented in the most forcible manner, the inflexible justice of God against sin, and his determination not to permit it to pass unpunished. And now, whilst my mind is filled with astonishment and love at such a glorious display of divine goodness, as is manifested in the sufferings and death of Christ, I want to crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts, and to feel dead to the world and all its allurements. I would remember my past follies with regret, lament the time I have abused, and recollect my ingratitude towards the most indulgent Benefactor with shame and sorrow. I would now call to mind the means of grace, and the opportunities of obtaining religious knowledge, which I have neglected to improve, the many vain and idle expressions (to say no worse of them) I have thoughtlessly uttered; the wandering of my thoughts even in the most solemn acts of religious worship; and numberless other crimes which have entirely escaped my memory. O that a review of these things might bumble my heart before God! I have been cultivated by the good husbandman, watered with

the dews of heavenly instruction, and walled around by many kind providences; but alas! I appear to have been unfruitful, or bringing forth wild grapes. The mere frivolous diversions in which I have engaged, although not sinful in themselves, yet by dissipating my thoughts and rendering me unfit for the active performance of that duty which I owe to my creator, call for my humiliation.—Now I am afraid you begin to be frightened, and are ready to exclaim, “What, is religion so gloomy a thing?”—Don’t draw any hasty conclusions. First experience the pleasure that results from religion, and then you will see the reasonableness of lamenting every thing that is an obstruction to your enjoying it.—I have for some time indulged the hope that all your objections to engaging in religion, would be overcome. Your judgment pleads in its favour; conscience warns you of the danger of neglecting it; and self-love suggests that it would be much wiser to secure the salvation of your soul, than to run the risk of suffering the wrath of God for ever. And whatever may be your present feelings, I am persuaded you have resisted some severe convictions, such as made you wish you were truly pious. All you need is a heart to love religion, and delight in the law of God after the inner man. But lest I weary you I will stop.—It will depend wholly on yourself whether this letter will please you or not. If you have been amongst your gay, fashionable, wild companions lately, it will be very tasteless; but if you are in a serious mood, I hope you will give it a reading at least.

Your’s with sincerity.

## ORIGINAL POETRY.


*Salvation in Christ. Acts iv, 12.*

- 1 An whither shall a sinner go  
To find a calm for all his woe?  
Who will my load of guilt remove,  
And turn Jehovah's wrath to love?
- 2 Thy laws, O God, I have transgress,  
Cherish'd thy foes within my breast,  
A rebel 'midst thy mercies stood—  
Strange folly! Base ingratitude!
- 3 Return, my wasted, murder'd time,  
Return ye days of youthful prime;  
O could I call you back again!  
But ye are lost, my wish is vain.
- 4 My crimes, a dreadful host, arise  
And cry for vengeance from the skies:  
I'm doom'd to everlasting pain,  
O where shall I relief obtain!
- 5 Ye sons of men, your aid afford,  
Shield me from Heav'n's avenging sword:  
Alas, in vain I fly to you,  
Ye all are helpless sinners too.
- 6 Angels, to you I turn my eye,  
Can ye a rebel's pardon buy?  
Ye cannot bid my sorrows cease,  
Ye cannot give my conscience peace.
- 7 And is there none to hear my prayer,  
And must I yield to black despair?  
I yield;—yet, righteous God, I own  
Thy sentence just, though I'm undone.
- 8 But hark! Methinks some friend is near,  
A gentle, pitying voice I hear;  
“Come hither, guilty, wretched soul,  
I make the wounded spirit whole.”

- 9 With trembling joy my soul looks up,  
Say, who art thou that bidd'st me hope?  
Again thy voice of mercy send,  
O who art thou, the sinner's friend?
- 10 "Jesus, the Saviour, is my name,  
Alone the character I claim;  
Gracious to comfort all that mourn,  
Mighty to save the wretch forlorn.
- 11 My glory, lo! I laid aside,  
For sinners, bled and groan'd and died:  
Behold my cross! with pangs unknown  
To save their souls I gave my own.
- 12 Exalted now, I ever live,  
Pardon and life are mine to give:  
With me the Father is well pleas'd,  
His wrath is by my death appeas'd.
- 13 Though great thy guilt, poor sinner, come,  
For thee my heart has ample room:  
Come trust my grace, no longer doubt,  
I never cast the mourner out."
- 14 And is there grace for crimes like mine,  
Salvation bought with grace divine!  
And do I see my guilt remove!—  
Amazing mercy! Boundless love!
- 15 Ye gloomy shades of death, away,  
O welcome, bright eternal day!  
Jesus, I come, I trust thy word,  
Thou art my Saviour and my Lord.
- 16 All that I need in thee I find,  
Pardon and life and peace of mind:  
To God thou hast me reconcil'd,  
He smiles, and owns me for his child.
- 7 What shall I render, Lord, to thee  
For all thy matchless love to me?  
I've nought to give:—Yet, Saviour, deign  
Forever in my heart to reign.

- 18 Come, ye dear saints, and I'll make known  
 What Jesus for my soul has done :  
 Yet the sweet wonders he has wrought  
 Exceed all words, exceed all thought.
- 19 Come, mourning sinners, taste his love,  
 His free, his rich salvation prove :  
 Ye shall confess his pow'r divine  
 To pardon sins ;—he pardon'd mine !
- 20 Join all my pow'rs of heart and tongue  
 To form a grateful, joyful song :  
 In sacred, high, immortal lays  
 Let earth and heaven the Saviour praise.

PHILANDER.

 Several communications have been received which shall  
 appear in the second number.

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