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BIOGRAPHY.

The following sketch of the life and character of the Rev. Dr. GEORGE DUFFIELD, late minister of the second Presbyterian church in the city of Philadelphia (born October, 1732. and who died February 2d, 1790) is taken from his funeral sermon, preached by the Rev. Dr. Green.—Gen. Assen. Mag.

FUNERAL panegyric has been so much abused, that it has, in a measure, defeated its own design. Extravagant and misapplied encomium, by its frequency and fallacy, has rendered even the truth suspicious. The truth, however, ought to be told; and, on the present occasion, it is our intention to be governed by it, in its rigorous strictness. And, indeed, so much may be said, without going beyond its bounds, that there is little temptation to transgress.

As a man, the reverend doctor Duffield possessed a vigorous, active, firm, and benevolent mind. He thought with energy and quickness; and he dreaded not the labour of thinking. In promptitude of conception, and readiness of utterance, few were his equals. These qualities, in early life, enabled him to preach with a frequency, of which the instances are rare: and throughout life, they gave him a consequence and utility in deliberative bodies, to which few can attain.

To the opinions which he formed, he adhered with steadiness. He was neither frightened from them by the number of his opponents, nor soothed by the respectability of their characters or stations. His behaviour, indeed, was at the farthest remove from disrespect: but he was, in an eminent degree, a man of an undaunted spirit. The firmness of his mind

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was a leading trait, a prominent feature of his whole character. It enabled him, in all the vicissitudes, and under the severest trials of life (and he was familiar with them) to maintain an equanimity of conduct, which seemed to flow from the fortitude of the philosopher, mingled with the patience and resignation of the christian.

His kindness and benevolence were great and extensive. They were the ornament of his other virtues. As a husband, a father, a brother, a master, and a friend, he was singularly indulgent, tender and affectionate. But his benevolence was not confined to these limits. It led him to be, in a peculiar manner, the friend of the friendless. He espoused their cause, and advanced their interest, with the warmest zeal. In his death, the afflicted, the distressed, and the poor, have lost one of their best friends and counsellors, and one of their warmest advocates and most constant visitors. It was this part of his character, which led him to connect himself with the various humane institutions in Philadelphia, and which rendered him one of their most active, attentive, and valuable members. It was his benevolent temper of mind, likewise, which rendered him so highly esteemed by almost all denominations of christians; and which disposed him to unite an extensive charity for those who differed from him in matters of faith or opinion, with an earnest contention for what he esteemed the truth.

As a scholar, he was considerably distinguished. He early discovered a thirst for knowledge, which led him to the pursuit of liberal science. In his academical course, he rose above most of his fellows; and was afterwards employed as a tutor, in the feminary which was the nurse of his juvenile studies. His knowledge was more of the solid, than of the ornamental or polished kind. He was accurate in classic learning: and he loved philosophy in all its branches. For these reasons, he was elected a member of the Philosophical Society, in Philadelphia, of which he was a diligent attendant, and a useful member.

As a citizen, he was highly distinguished for public spirit, and the love of liberty, and for the promotion of every design, which had for its object the general welfare. No one was a more zealous and active patriot than he; or in the smaller divisions of society, more sincerely endeavoured to do service to the community. In the late struggle for liberty in America, he was an early, a decided, and a uniform friend to his country: and since the peace he has been equally assiduous, in using all his influence to advance the public interest and tranquility.

As a christian, he shone conspicuously. He lived the religion which he professed. The spirit of the gospel seemed to have tinged his whole mind, and to possess a constant and powerful influence on his heart. He was, truly and remarkably, an example of the life of God in the soul of man. His "fellowship with the Father of his spirit," and his "conversation with Heaven," appeared to be almost uninterrupted. Nor was he less distinguished in active duty. He sought all occasions of serving his Lord. Of him it may be said with truth, that he "went about doing good."

As a divine, he was thoroughly acquainted with the most approved systems of Calvinistic divinity. He was a warm admirer and advocate of the doctrines of grace. He was ever ready to plead for, and defend them in public and private. Descended from pious parents, "from a child he had known the Holy Scriptures:" and he improved his early acquaintance with them, into a familiarity seldom acquired. He read them in their original languages, of which he was no unskilful master. In ecclesiastical history, his knowledge, if not minute, was comprehensive; and in the government and discipline of the Presbyterian church, I believe he hath not left a superior, in an acquaintance with all its parts. He was honoured for these accomplishments with the degree of Doctor in Divinity.

As a preacher of the gospel, he was indefatigable, evangelical, and successful. He was "a workman that needed not to

be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of life." In the early part of his ministry, while his imagination retained its fervour, he was remarkably animated in his public addresses, and unusually popular. An intimation that he was to preach, was the sure signal of a crowded auditory. His manner was always warm and forcible, and his instructions always practical. He had a talent of touching the conscience, and seizing the heart, almost peculiar to himself. He dwelt much on the great, plain and essential truths of the gospel. Yet he was master of a singularly happy method of explaining Scripture, which in more advanced life, he frequently practised.

His first settlement in the gospel ministry, was at the town of Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Here he was abundant in labours. His natural activity and industry enabled him, not only to feed the flock of which he was the immediate overseer, but to water the vacant parts of his Lord's vineyard, to which he was contiguous, in almost an incredible degree.

These circumstances marked him out as one properly and peculiarly qualified for planting and organizing churches, in places destitute of the regular administration of gospel ordinances. To this important business he was therefore called and appointed by the Synod of New-York and Philadelphia; and, in company with the late reverend Mr. Beatty, spent a year, in visiting the frontiers of the country, to preach the word of life to those who were perishing for "lack of knowledge;" and to form them into congregations for the stated reception and support of the gospel. A printed memorial of this tour has been given to the world; and is a monument of his zeal and labour in the cause of Christ, and for the good of souls. During his residence at Carlisle, his ministry, through the effusion and application of the divine spirit, was made effectual to turn many "from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God." But his talents drew him at length into a more public sphere; and placed him as the pastor of this flock. Here, my brethren, you have been witnesses, both of his respectability and fidelity, in his sacred of-

face. You have seen him possess a distinguished weight and influence, in all the judicatories of the church to which he belonged. You have seen him happily unite "the wisdom of the serpent with the harmlessness of the dove," in the management of all its concerns and interests. You have seen him called, by the supreme council of the nation, to officiate as one of their chaplains, during the whole of their residence in Philadelphia. But, what he was more solicitous about than for all earthly honours, and you should remember with more care and pleasure, you have seen him "instant in season and out of season," to promote your spiritual and eternal welfare. He has truly "watched for you," as one that had the charge of souls. He has broken unto you the "bread of life." He has been to you a faithful and an "able minister of the New Testament." It was his zeal to do good, that exposed him to the disease, by which he has been called from you. Such was the man over whom we lament, and whose decease is a loss, not to you only, but to the whole church of Christ.



*The Rev. Mr. Kicherer's Narrative of his Mission to the Hot-
tentots.*

(Continued from page 23.)

HAVING continued at the Great River about ten months, and finding that the produce of the land was insufficient for the support of our numerous cattle, we thought it expedient to separate. We began to remove in the month of March, 1802. The river being then low, we took the favorable opportunity of crossing it; but as we could not at that time pass the desert, we erected sheds of branches for a temporary residence, till we should be able to pursue our journey to Zak river. Here we celebrated the New Year; when all my people came to dine with me, and I preached to them on the parable of the Barren Fig-Tree. I was much indisposed in bo-

dy at this time, owing, I conceive, to the want of bread ; nor was I more comfortable in my mind.

I should have remarked, that in the month of January, the English Commissioners, returning from the Bootsuannas, requested me to assist them in procuring cattle ; I therefore accompanied them to the Kraal of Cornelius Cock, by whom we were kindly received. Immediately I embraced the opportunity of preaching, and teaching the people, which I continued from morning to night.

My poor people, at home, were in the mean time in much danger of being deprived of all their property, by a Boschman free-booter of great fame, whose name is Courakakoup. Providence, however, seasonably interposed, and prevented this mischief. About this time, General Dundas, the British Governor of the Cape, was pleased to make me a present of 100l. in reward of my services, and offered to promote me to the living at Rodezand, where Mr. Vofs had been minister ; this generous offer however I thought it right to decline.

Some of the Boschemen of the country about Zak river, who expressed a desire for our return to that neighborhood, having mischievously given us false information, that considerable rain had fallen in the wilderness, (a circumstance which alone could enable us to pass it,) we broke up our encampment, and commenced our journey. We had not proceeded far, before we were convinced that the Boschemen had deceived us.—We travelled till the third day without finding a drop of water. Our cattle then began to be in the utmost distress ; their looks indicated extreme anguish, and their piteous lowing seemed to forbode our destruction in the wilderness. At length we found a very small pool, just sufficient to assuage our own thirst, but not that of our animals. A girl was just going to drink, when, to our great mortification, we perceived that it had been poisoned by the Boschemen, for we discovered many heads of serpents swimming in it. I know it is commonly reported that the venom of serpents may be swallowed without danger, but our experience leads

is to believe the contrary. Water thus poisoned will soon cause a person who has drank it to become so giddy that he cannot walk upright, and if an antidote be not speedily administered, he will certainly expire in a few hours. It is, however, true, that Boschemen, being properly prepared, will drink the poisoned water without prejudice to their health. We were greatly distressed on the sight of these serpents' heads, and knew not what course to take. I deliberated in my own mind, whether I should call the people together for a public prayer-meeting on this occasion, to implore of God a supply of rain; but having weighed the matter fully, I resolved to apply in private prayer to our Saviour, and being supported in this by my Brother Scholtz, we earnestly intreated his help in this time of need. The Lord graciously heard the voice of our supplication, granting us, in the course of a few hours, such "showers of blessings," as put a period to our distress. We praised the name of Christ, and stayed two days at this place to recruit our cattle.

On the morning which was fixed for our departure, one of the cows came home with an arrow sticking in her flank. We immediately concluded that the Boschemen had driven away part of our herd. In these cases they oblige the cattle to run as fast as they can, and when any of them is unable to keep up with the rest, they pierce it with a dart; in consequence of which it falls on the road, and the carcas is fetched away by the robbers on the following day. The cow which returned to us had been thus treated, and served as a messenger to apprise us of what had happened. I dispatched some Hottentots with fire-arms to pursue the track of the banditti, and in the mean time travelled on with the remainder of the Caravan. On the next day, my people joined us with seventy-three out of eighty oxen which had been stolen from us. They had happily fallen in with the robbers, at the distance of a long day's journey beyond the hills, and recovered the property; but two of our horses had been killed by the fatigue.

Leaving my flock under the care of Brother Scholtz, I hastened forward, towards the residence of the nearest farmers, partly that I might gratify my extreme longing for a morsel of bread, having been without this kind of food for half a year. I stopped on the road only a single night, urging my journey with all possible dispatch, in company with three of the best of my people, Cornelius and James de Trees, and John Kotze, whose conversation was singularly spiritual and pleasant; happier hours than these I scarcely ever spent. At length I came within sight of the first farmers house, my joy on approaching which was inexpressible. My first request was for a piece of bread, which I immediately devoured with the keenest appetite. It is difficult to conceive of the gratification I enjoyed, when tasting once more this long-missed article of food.—Shortly after this, I arrived in safety at my home near Zak river. I rejoiced exceedingly when I regained the favored spot, where the Lord had shown me so many wonders of his grace and goodness. My dear Cornelius was overjoyed, and said, “O Sir! what happy times have we formerly had here! This little house, could it speak, would tell us what thousands of gracious words have here been spoken in it, and how good the Lord has here been to us poor Hottentots!”

A convenient opportunity presenting itself at this time for a visit to the Cape, I gladly embraced it, as I had conceived a plan of forming a regular congregation of Hottentots, for which purpose I stood in need of a variety of articles, and particularly a good stock of clothes. Nothing very remarkably happened on this journey, but, wherever I had opportunity, I preached to the people who collected at different places as before, and I humbly trust “the Lord gave testimony to the word of his grace.”

When I arrived at Cape-Town, I received the money from the honorable Governor, which he had before promised to give me; and which I immediately laid out in the purchase of clothing, and needful utensils for our settlement. Here

also I received the repeated offer of the church at Rodezand, which, for the sake of my poor people at Zak River, I thought it my duty to decline.

As soon as I could dispatch my business at the Cape, I hastened back to my situation in the wilderness; when I informed my people, that I had refused the living at Rodezand; and assured them that I would never forsake them, provided they should discover a spirit of industry, and would be more diligent than they had formerly been in cultivating the ground, and in other useful employments; but I told them that if they should hereafter grieve me, as they had done, by their idleness, they might depend on it, I would leave them, and accept of the Church at Rodezand. The people, in reply, promised me every thing I could desire, and assured me that I should have no cause to complain. I therefore immediately set about the erection of a more commodious building for a church, to assist me in which, the farmers lent me two slaves, one a Carpenter, and the other a Mason. The Hottentots began at first to help forward the good work; but their natural indolence soon made them weary of the labor.* I then repeated my former declaration, adding, that I would certainly leave them in the course of eight days, if I did not see an increase of their diligence. A scene ensued, which I cannot recollect without much emotion. They began to weep, and entreat me so importunately, that my heart melted within me; I then gave them my word that I would not desert them. The joy

* Mr. Kicherer, in conversation on this subject, informed us, that before he left the settlement, he had prevailed on the Hottentots to work two hours in the day, which he considered as a great point gained with people who, in their heathen state, never worked at all; and he hoped shortly to get them to work three hours in a day, and hereafter four; and so leading them on by degrees to a life of activity and industry becoming christians.

occasioned by this promise was excessive. Many of them clasped their arms round my neck ; and I was convinced that they loved me far more than I had imagined. Just at this critical moment, the clerk of the church at Rodezand, arrived at our settlement with a second invitation. Had he come eight days sooner, I know not what I might have done ; but now his labor proved in vain. In this matter I clearly saw the finger of God.

I continued about ten months at Zak river, during which time I formed a regular settlement, Mr. Scholtz proving very helpful to me. This spot is situated in an elevated valley surrounded by barren mountains, without a single tree to enliven the prospect. The Zak river is, in the dry season, a small brook which descends into the Fish river, which latter is supposed to lose itself in a plain near the mountains ; both of these rivers produce a plenty of good fish, of which, however, the Hottentots are not very fond, nothing but mutton, wild cattle and milk suiting their palates.

Besides our church, which is capable of containing eight hundred people,* we have a good dwelling house, consisting of several rooms on one floor, the whole being built of stone. Nearly opposite the door of the house is the fountain, or spring, which supplies ourselves and our cattle with water. We have a good garden, inclosed, for our more tender vegetables, and garden ground adjoining it for more hardy plants. Before our house, the baptized Hottentots have built themselves decent habitations, in the farmers' style ; and at the back of it the Heathen live in small huts. We have also a cattle yard, surrounded with a high wall, behind the house of the christian Hottentots ; and, on the north side of the river which is about three quarters of a mile distant, are our

* The dimensions of the church are about sixty feet by thirty, which would be insufficient for 800 people, accommodated in the European manner ; but the Hottentots sit squatted on the ground very close together. The baptized sit on planks laid across stones.

Corn fields.* The country round about us produces few plants, spontaneously, though it is well supplied with sweet and fertilizing springs. The heat, in the day time, is very great, and the cold of the night is very piercing. In the winter there are sharp dry frosts, which prove very destructive to the vegetables. We have no snow there, but it is visible on the tops of the distant mountains a great part of the year. In the summer months, from January to April, we have powerful rains, frequently attended with terrible storms of thunder and lightning, which are some times destructive both to men and beasts. The country produces little grass, but the cattle crop the tops of the low bushes. Unseasonable rains often produce unfruitful seasons. Shortly after the rainy season, the winter commences, when the crops are often destroyed. In the dry season, we are obliged to water our garden plants every day.

Amidst a variety of difficulties, we have been able to persevere in forming a christian settlement, in this unpromising spot; and small as the beginning may seem, yet, all the circumstances considered, I trust it will appear that much has been done, and that there is reason to hope with the blessing of God that much more will yet be effected.

While we were diligently employed in our attempts to civilize the people, we had the satisfaction to find that the work of the Lord prospered in our hands. An instance or two of the power of divine grace on the hearts of the people may be here mentioned.

James Scheffer, a converted Hottentot, and who had become a very circumspect character, one day he told me, that he found himself to be one of the greatest of all sinners, and that as such he daily turned to the Lord Jesus, for that God,

* *The Indian corn flourishes exceedingly, and grows to a great size: the Hottentots are very fond of this, especially when it is parched.*

viewed out of Christ, appeared to him as a consuming fire. Now, he said, his earnest desire was not merely to be delivered from the punishment of his sin, but he longed to enjoy communion with God, and to be more intimately acquainted with that good Being who had so long borne with him; but how to obtain this communion he knew not. I then asked him what he understood by fellowship or communion with God. He replied, "Sometimes when I have been engaged in prayer, I have had a sweet feeling, such as I cannot describe; it was just as if God was no longer my enemy, and then I felt inexpressible love to the Lord Jesus. But I want to be certainly assured of this, that God is no longer my enemy: I want to be enabled to say to him—" My Father:" but to do this I have never yet found liberty." In answer to him, I said—That you find you are a sinner is well; that you seek after Jesus, and feel the joy of the Holy Spirit in your heart, is well too; but that you feel a repugnancy to say to God, "My Father!" is unbelief, and the very thing that deprives you of sweet communion with God, and of that blessed assurance of faith, which is so strongly commended in his word. Were God your enemy, you would never feel that joy, or that love to Jesus, of which you speak, but rather dread and horror. You have certainly reason to believe that God is your gracious Father in Jesus Christ.—He afterwards obtained a full assurance of his adoption.

Krissy, a daughter of the old Bastard Hottentot John, was blessed with an hearing ear and an attentive heart. I was first acquainted with her just before our removal to the Great river. Her convictions of sin were then powerful, and, on our journey, she told me that she had given up her whole self to the Lord, and was assured that he had accepted of her, and was become her friend. One day, being with a number of Hottentots in the field, engaged in digging up a sort of root, she opened her heart to me, and expressed with great fluency the warmth of her love to the Friend of sinners. "All that was in the world," she said "durst not come into comparison with

“Him.” At another time, when she was in a dry and barren frame of mind, the Lord suited me to speak a word in season, directed to her case. In discoursing on such an uncomfortable state, I was led to insist upon the privilege of a believer still to have free access to God, as it was not for the sake of our long and fervent prayers that he became gracious to us. After sermon she came and informed me of her situation, and of the comfort she had derived from the discourse. “How happy is it,” said she, that God knows all things, yea “the most secret motions of my heart; formerly this idea “used to make me tremble, but now I rejoice in it. He, “knowing my distress, directed you to speak that word to me; “he has heard my secret groans, and sent me relief.” Some time after this her religious affections cooled, and she became more indifferent to the things of God. Perceiving this I said to her, “Krisly, you are no more what you have been. You “do not now retire for prayer as you formerly did.”—“Alas!” she replied, “I am now afraid to approach the Lord; I have been too bad of late.” She was informed that this was a snare of Satan in which she was entangled, and which she must needs break through, going to Jesus, just as at first, with all her guilt and misery. She obeyed, and recovered her peace.

(To be concluded.)

REMARKABLE PANICKS.

IN reading that part of the Rev. Mr. Kicherer's Narrative, published in the sixth number of the *Virginia Religious Magazine*, my attention was arrested by the account he gives of a remarkable deliverance experienced by him from the wicked designs of a man who called himself Stephanos. Mr. Kicherer says, "It should seem that he had contrived a scheme to murder me, that he might seize on my waggon and goods, and then depart to a distant Horde. In the night, he actually approached my bed; but the keeper of Israel who never slumbers nor sleeps, was pleased *suddenly to rouse me in a fit of terror*, in which I cried out to him, as if privy to his bloody design. He was disconcerted, stammered an apology of a pain in his bowels, and then went away out of my house," &c.

Whatever may be thought of this and things of a similar nature, or in whatever way they are to be accounted for, it is certain such things have frequently happened: attended often with very remarkable circumstances. Were I to relate a tenth part of what I have heard from persons of credit, of things of this nature, it would fill several sheets. The following facts, being well authenticated, will be sufficient to answer my present design. If any one wishes to hear more of things of this nature, let him occasionally introduce the subject in conversation, and if I am not mistaken, he will soon hear of instances enough.

Mr. James Moore, who is still living in the county of Tazewell, was taken by the Indians, when about fifteen years of age. He was going to a waste plantation, two or three miles from the place where his father then lived, to catch a horse. As he was walking along the path unapprehensive of any danger, he was suddenly seized with a panick so powerful, that it caused him instantly to stop. His knees trembled, and his

mind was filled with the most awful apprehensions. He thought of returning home, but expected if he returned with such a story he would be laughed at. He therefore proceeded on his way, frequently halting and thinking of turning his course; but was still at a loss for a reason to justify him in doing so. In this situation he proceeded for, perhaps, three quarters of a mile; until at length, an Indian rose up a short distance from the path, came to him and laid hold of him. Supposing it possible that he had been thinking of Indians, and that this might have given rise to his fears, I enquired of him whether it were not so. He replied, that he did not recollect thinking of Indians the whole time; that his mind was filled with the apprehension that some dreadful animal, such as he had never seen or heard of, would fall on him and devour him: that when he first saw the Indian, he thought he was the animal of which he had been apprehensive: and that when he discovered that he was a human being, his fear left him.

In the life of the Earl of Rochester, written by Bishop Burnet, is the following account, which, it appears, was communicated to the Bishop by the Earl himself.

“When he (the Earl) went to sea in the year 1665, there happened to be in the same ship with him Mr. Mountague, and another gentleman of quality; these two, the former especially, seemed persuaded that they should never return to England. Mr. Mountague said he was sure of it; the other was not so positive. When the day came that they thought to have taken the Dutch fleet in the port of Bergen, Mr. Mountague, though he had such a strong presage in his mind of his approaching death, yet he generously stayed all the while in a place of the greatest danger. The other gentleman equalized his courage in a most undaunted manner, till near the end of the action, when he fell on a sudden into such a trembling that he could scarce stand; and Mr. Mountague going up to him to hold him up, as they were in each others arms, a cannon ball killed them outright, and carried away Mr. Mountague's belly, so that he died within an hour after.”

The Earl of Rochester told me (continues the Bishop) that these presages they had on their minds, made some impression on him, that there were separated beings; and the soul, either by natural sagacity or some secret notice communicated to it, had a sort of divination."

In addition to the above facts, there are two others, too remarkable to be omitted. One is, that Homer sometimes represents his heroes when about to be slain, as having, not only a presage of their fate, but as being struck with a panick, very much like that in the passage above quoted, from the life of Rochester.

Witness the case of Patroclus. After representing him engaged with the Trojans and performing prodigies of valor, we find the following lines, as translated by Cowper.

" But when the fourth time, deamon like, he rush'd

" Against them, then, oh then, too manifest—

" The consumation of thy days approach'd

" Patroclus! * * * * *

" Confusion seiz'd his brain; his noble limbs

" Quak'd under him, and panick-stun'd he stood.

" Then came a Dardon chief, who from behind,

" Enforc'd a pointed lance into his back

" Between the shoulders," &c.

This, to be sure, is the fiction of the poet. But it affords sufficient evidence, that such things had been observed in the days of Homer; else, how came he by the knowledge of them, or why does he give them a place in his poem.

The other case is that of Ahasuerus, king of Babylon, of which we have an account in the book of Esther. Haman advanced to riches and honor by the king, was elated with pride and highly exasperated, because Mordecai the jew, who sat at the king's gate, would not bow to him. By the advice of his wife and friends, he had a gallows erected, fifty cubits high, on which he designed Mordecai to be hung. Of all this it appears the king Ahasuerus was ignorant. But (chap. vi. verse 1, &c.) "*On that night could not the king sleep; and he*

“commanded to bring the book of records of the chronicles,
 “and they were read before the king. And it was found
 “written, that Mordecai had told of Bigthana and Teresh,
 “two of the king’s chamberlains, the keepers of the door,
 “who sought to lay hands on the king Ahasuerus. And the
 “king said what honor and dignity hath been done to Mor-
 “decai for this?” &c.

Although this account is found in a book of the sacred Scriptures, it, nevertheless, appears to contain nothing more than an authentic history of what befel a heathen Prince. Nor can I see any reason why the same, or a similar thing might not happen to any one now, or at any other period of the world. Viewed in this light it serves to shew us how the supreme disposer of all events, who has the hearts of all flesh in his hand, turns them whithersoever he pleases. We are told ‘*the king could not sleep.*’ In this it seems naturally implied, that he felt an unusual restlessness and inquietude. But little he thinks of the invisible hand that drove sleep from his pillow, or of the end it was designed to answer. He was, however, led to order that the book of records of the chronicles should be brought and read before him: and by that means was Mordecai saved from the gallows, that very night erected for him by Haman. But to whom are we ultimately, to ascribe this deliverance? Evidently to him who works all things according to the council of his own will. The primary agent was behind the curtain, but the work manifests its author. It could not be Haman, for he was plotting Mordecai’s destruction. It could not be Ahasuerus, for he was ignorant of Haman’s designs. Nor could it be Mordecai, for he knew not what was doing either by Haman or the king. And to ascribe it to chance would be as unreasonable as it would to make chance the author of that nice design and beautiful harmony, manifest in the visible creation. Although this last case is not exactly of the same nature with those before stated, yet as it bears a strong resemblance to them, I have thought proper to mention it.

I will now add a few reflections on the facts above stated.

1, They have all the marks of credibility which we could reasonably expect in cases of such a nature. They happened at very distant periods, and in parts of the world very remote from each other. There could be no concert, nor is there the least reason to believe there was any intention to deceive. It appears to me, that, in whatever way they may be accounted for, facts of a nature so remarkable, and attested by evidence so various and respectable, have a just claim to our attention: and that to overlook them, or pass them with a sneer, is as unphilosophical as it is impious.

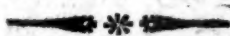
2, I can see no rational way of accounting for those facts, but that suggested by the Earl of Rochester, viz. that they were produced by some invisible and intelligent agent or agents. If any are for ascribing them to chance, the Deity of atheists and infidels, let them please to inform us what they mean by chance, and what effects it has been known to produce. But could chance rouse Mr. Kicherer at the very moment the murderer was approaching his bed? Could chance paralyze the limbs of Mr. Moore when he was approaching the grasp of the unknown and unsuspected savage? Did chance know the direction of the cannon ball that took the life of the gentleman, mentioned by the Earl of Rochester? Had chance given it its commission, and did this all powerful agent suddenly take the strength and courage from that gentleman, while he was ignorant of what awaited him? If so, chance is not only powerful, but intelligent. For surely nothing void of intelligence could do such things.

3. It is not improbable, but that those things were effected by the instrumentality of intelligent agents, subordinate to, and dependant on the Deity. Of the existence of such agents, both good and bad, and of their influence on men, the scriptures leave no room to doubt. And their existence, let infidels say what they please, is so far from being repugnant to reason, that reason itself renders it probable. All nature is stocked with life. The air, the earth, the sea, are full of ani-

imals. Nature in this sense seems to abhor a vacuum. Life appears to be moulded into every possible consistent form, and every rock that can sustain it in any of those forms is stocked with it. "Every part of matter, says *Mr. Addison*, is peopled; every green leaf swarms with inhabitants. There is scarcely a single humour in the body of man, or of any other animal, in which our glasses do not discover myriads of living creatures. We find even in the most solid bodies, as marble itself, innumerable cells and cavities, which are crowded with such imperceptible inhabitants, as are too little for the naked eye to discover." What shall we say to these things? Does the infinitely wise and glorious God take pleasure in giving life to such immense multitudes of insignificant animals, and has he no delight in giving existence to creatures of a more exalted nature, and more noble workmanship? But besides this, exuberance of life, evidently manifesting a disposition in the Deity to confer existence, we see a nice and beautiful gradation from the lowest up to man, evidently the top piece of the globe we inhabit. Shall we then conclude that this gradation rises no higher than man? Is that inconceivable space between man and the Deity unoccupied? Such a dreary chasm in nature is contradicted by the analogy of every part of the creation which is subject to our scrutiny. Who then can say that the existence of intelligent agents, unincumbered with bodies, is either impossible or improbable.

4, Admitting the above remarks to be just, if the matter is duly considered, it will not, I conceive, either encourage superstition or favour impulses in any sense that will be exceptonable or dangerous. However numerous inferior agents may be, or whatever powers they may possess, they are all but ministers to execute the will of the most high; and are entirely under his control. We have, therefore, no reason to seek the favor or dread the displeasure of any one but God. And as to impulses, should any one experience a panick similar to any of those above stated, it would not warrant him to do any thing which would otherwise be criminal, or to neglect

any thing which would otherwise be duty. The only legitimate use which he could make of it would be, to rouse him to circumspection, and to inspire him with caution. If in circumstances similar to those of Mr. Moore, he should be led to suspect that danger attended the path he was pursuing, and should thereby be put on his guard, or determined to pursue his object by an other rout, I do not know that he would act irrationally, or that the consequence could be dangerous. It would indeed have something of the appearance of being governed by an impulse, but it would not be making it the rule of Deity.



FOR THE VIRGINIA RELIGIOUS MAGAZINE.



INFANT BAPTISM.—No. III.

It is proper that we should now inquire whether the practice of the Apostles corresponded with the interpretation which has been given of Christs' commission to his disciples, in the preceding number.

The witnesses of the Apostolical practice are of two kinds—first, the inspired writers—and secondly, the ecclesiastical authors, of the first, and purest ages of the church. To the testimony of the inspired writers no objection can be made. As far as it is clear, it is decisive. But the Baptists enter a solemn protest, against admitting the fathers as witnesses in this cause. They pretend that it is a departure from the great Protestant principle, '*that the Scriptures are our only infallible rule of faith and practice;*' but this is not true, for we introduce them, not to establish by their authority, a new principle; or ordinance, but only to give their testimony as to matters of fact, of which they undoubtedly are competent, and credible witnesses. We should be careful not to invalidate the testimony of these ancient servants of Jesus Christ, because upon it we depend for the genuineness of the scrip-

tures, of the New Testament. How can we know that the Gospels and epistles were written by the persons whose names they bear, or that they were written at the time when those men lived, except by the testimony of their successors? And these are the very persons, by whose writings it may be proved, that infant baptism was practised from the days of the Apostles. And surely if their testimony be received in the first case it cannot consistently be refused in the last; for it was as easy for them to know what the Apostles practised, as what they wrote. I do not affirm, that they have given their testimony as fully in the latter, as in the former case, but as far as it goes, it is of the same kind, and ought not to be rejected. It is of no consequence, what their opinions, respecting the use and necessity of baptism, were. We do not produce them as authorities to regulate our opinions in matters of doctrine. Being fallible men they were liable to err, as well as others, but in matters of fact, they certainly may be depended on, for many of them proved their sincerity, by shedding their blood as martyrs for the truth. The question, which should be seriously pondered by the Baptists is, whether learned men who lived within one hundred years of the Apostles' times, could be mistaken with respect to their practice in a matter of this sort? We live nearly three hundred years from the commencement of the reformation, and yet we find no difficulty in ascertaining what the practice of the reformers was, in administering the sacraments. And I do not see why Origen, Cyprian, and Gregory Nazianzen, should not have known as well the practice of the Apostles. If a corrupt practice had crept into all the churches, and they had connived at it, yet they must have known the steps by which it was introduced, and would never have been so presumptuous as to charge it upon the Apostles.

I shall therefore proceed to cite testimonies in favor of Infant baptism, beginning with the inspired writers. And the first which I shall produce, is Luke, the companion of Paul, and the recorder of the most remarkable transactions of his life.

In the xvi. chap. of the Acts of the Apostles, he informs us that at Philippi, Paul baptized Lydia, and 'her household.' By which we are led to believe, that the old method of receiving profelytes by whole families was not abolished, but continued. For if a new principle had been introduced, that none but adult believers should be admitted into the church, the inspired historian would scarcely have expressed the transaction, in language so well calculated to mislead those, who had been accustomed to see whole households received into the church of God, by circumcision, and baptism. What is meant when it is said that the household of this woman was baptized, but that all her family, children and servants, who were completely under her control, were with her received into the church. It is true, no mention is made of infants—neither was it necessary—Children make a large part of most households, and the example before us authorizes us to baptize the whole household upon the conversion of the head. But it is pretended that all who were baptized by the Apostle were believers, or made a profession of faith—Let this be proved, and we will give up the example, as making nothing in our favor. It is said, that Lydia, was not at her own proper home, at Philippi, as the text informs us she was of Thyatira—But let her home, have been here, or there, she had her household with her, and no more is meant when it is said she was of Thyatira, than that she was born and brought up there, as Paul is said to be of *Tarsus* for the same reason.

But it is thought to be improbable that she should have young children, as no mention is made of her husband, and the house is called her own—What her relative situation was, cannot now be ascertained—neither can it be determined whether she had infants in the house. We suppose it probable that she had, because children make a part of most houses, but we do not affirm it as a certain fact. We do not lay any great stress upon it. What we affirm, and what we think sufficient, is, that upon her conversion, her household was baptized in consequence of it, as well as herself. The question

which needs the force of an example to decide it, is not so much whether infants were actually baptized, as whether the old custom of receiving profelytes was retained; for we know if this can be established, infant baptism follows of course— And the example now under consideration, appears to me to prove, that the custom of the apostles was to receive as disciples the whole household upon the faith of its head. But to turn aside the force of this example, the Baptists have one more subterfuge, which is derived from the last verse in the chapter; where it is said ‘ And they went out of the prison, and entered into the house of Lydia; and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them and departed.’ The argument is, that Lydia’s household could not be infants, because they were capable of being comforted. The reader perhaps will think with me, that this evasion deserves to be called pitiful. It is not even intimated, that these brethren, whom Paul and Silas comforted, were of the household of Lydia. It is known to every person, who has read the whole chapter attentively, that there were other persons besides Silas in Paul’s company, when he came to Philippi, particularly Luke and Timothy, who were not committed to prison, and who were no doubt greatly distressed, at the ill-usage of their companions, and much comforted to meet them after their deliverance— These therefore I suppose, were the brethren spoken of; but if not there were no doubt many converts made by the Apostles’ preaching, besides Lydia, as the text says he was *many days*, in the city before he was apprehended; and we know that in a short time there was a flourishing church in this place— This example of household baptism appears therefore to be perfectly in point, and to be unincumbered with any difficulty which detracts from its force. The next instance is recorded in the same chapter, and is so nearly similar in its import, that it will be unnecessary to consider it minutely. I will only observe, that the 34th verse ought to be translated—‘ *He having believed in God rejoiced with all his house,*’ so that it appears that the Jailor’s family, was also baptized upon *his* profession

of faith, and not upon their *own*. But I will not insist on this example, but proceed to introduce another witness viz. Paul himself.

In 1 Cor. i. 16. he says 'And I baptized also the household of Stephanas'—This example certainly serves to shew that the baptism of whole households was an established practice in the time of the Apostles, and as to what is alledged about the members of this household addicting themselves many years after their baptism, to the ministry of the saints, it is too weak to deserve any reply.

Household baptism is established therefore by plain scripture examples, and as infants are a component part of most households, we are authorized to administer this ordinance to them, when found in the house of a believer.

But I will now produce a testimony from the same epistle of the same inspired Apostle, which in my apprehension, more clearly alludes to the practice of infant baptism, than any other text in the New Testament. I mean the 14th verse of the vii. chapter, in which children in consequence of the faith of one of their parents are said to be (*hagia*) holy. This word used in the original, does not precisely correspond with the English word holy, by which it is translated, but properly signifies any person or thing, *set apart, or consecrated, to the service of God*, as does the Hebrew word (*kadosh*) which is constantly rendered (*hagios*) by the septuagint. Hear Doctor G. Campbell on this point. * "In regard to the word "Kadosh, Hagios, I acknowledge that it does not seem to me "to have had originally any relation to character or morals. "Its primitive signification appears to have been *clean*. First "literally: secondly as expressing what according to the reli- "gious ritual, was accounted *clean*. The first is natural, the "second ceremonial cleanness. Some traces of the first of "these meanings, we have in the Old Testament, but nothing

* *D. Pre. Diss. P. 96.*

“is more common there than the second, particularly in the Pentateuch. Again as things are made clean, to prepare them for being used, the term has been adopted to denote, thirdly, *prepared, fitted, destined*, for a particular purpose whatever that purpose may be. Fourthly, and more especially, *consecrated*, or devoted to a religious use.” &c.*

All real critics as far as I know are agreed upon this subject. Then we have an inspired Apostle declaring to the Corinthian church that their children were consecrated to God, or holy, in opposition to those who were *akatharta* unclean which can mean nothing else than that these children had been baptized, which is the ceremony by which Christians are separated from the world, and consecrated to the service of God. And accordingly the members of Christian churches are constantly addressed by the appropriate title of, *hagiois*, which is translated, saints, but means, consecrated, that is baptized persons. And when the same title by which church members are designated commonly is applied to children, can we doubt that they were also baptized; the explanation of this text which would make the word (*hagia*) holy, signify legitimate, is really too absurd to require a serious confutation. It will be sufficient to observe that although this term, be used several hundreds of times in the scriptures it is never used in any such sense. And the context is so far from requiring such an interpretation that to admit it makes the Apostle guilty of an absurdity; as though he should say, notwithstanding you have been regularly married, yet if the unbelieving husband were not sanctified by the believing wife your children would be illegitimate, *but now are they legitimate*. Surely the Apostle did not mean to say this, and if not what could he mean but that the children by being dedicated to God by a solemn rite, were relatively holy? There is but one objection to this

* See Doctor Campbell's whole dissertation, on the words *hagios* and *hosios*.

interpretation which deserves any notice, and that is, that the same kind of holiness is predicated of the unbelieving parent and the children; and if it follows that the children were, or ought to be baptized because they are called *holy*, then the same conclusion must be drawn with respect to the unbelieving parent, which it is supposed, would be absurd. To this I answer,

1. That even if the difficulty of giving a satisfactory explanation of what is meant by the sanctification of the unbelieving parent, should not be removed, yet that is no reason why we should not be able to understand the term *holy* as applied to the children of a believing parent.

2. The common explication of these words is much more rational and consistent than any one yet proposed by the Baptists. Dr. Doddridge paraphrases the verse thus "For in such a case as this the unbelieving husband is so sanctified to the wife and the unbelieving wife is so sanctified to the husband, that their matrimonial converse, is as lawful as if they were both of the same faith, otherwise your children in these mixed cases were unclean, and must be looked upon as unfit to be admitted to those peculiar ordinances by which the seed of God's people are distinguished, but now they are confessedly holy"—And in a note this judicious and candid writer, says "On the maturest and most impartial consideration of this text I must judge it to refer to *infant-baptism*."

3. But I must confess I am better pleased with the learned Dr. Hammond's exposition of this text than any one which I have yet seen, because it makes the sanctification spoken of, to be the same, both with regard to the unbelieving parents, and the children; and because it puts the verb (*eghustai*) in its true tense. In our translation it is rendered as if it were the present time, whereas it is found in the perfect, and instead of, *is sanctified*, ought to be translated, *has been sanctified*. Concerning the strict propriety of this translation, no one can doubt, who understands any thing of the Greek language,

whatever he may think of the explanation which is here subjoined. The unbelieving husband has been sanctified by the believing wife—that is “it is a strong argument why the believer should not forsake the unbeliever, that it has often been the case that the unbelieving husband has been won over to the belief of the Gospel, by the chaste and holy conversation of the wife and has been consequently induced to submit to baptism; by which he was *sanctified* or consecrated to the service of God, and also the unbelieving wife, by the husband; and were it not for the expectation of this event, the children of such of you as are in this situation would have been left out of the church, but now are they by baptism received into it.” For the prospect of instruction in the religion of Christ is the great reason why any are admitted into the church—The above interpretation seems to be corroborated, by the 16th verse, ‘*For what knowest thou O wife, but thou shalt save thy husband; or how knowest thou O man but thou shalt save thy wife?*’ By these words it appears, that the great motive which the Apostle urged, to induce the believer not to leave the unbeliever, was the prospect there was, of his conversion; and as the 14th verse will bear the same sense, I am inclined to think the scope of the Apostle requires that it should be so understood, although I am not insensible that there is some difficulty attached to this interpretation; but perhaps it is not so great as at first sight it might appear.

There is only one more authority, which I mean to use, from the inspired writers, and that is, that the Apostles in writing to the churches, the members of which are designated by the term *hagiois*, or *consecrated ones*, address themselves to children of all ages who were capable of rendering obedience to parents, “Children obey your parents,” is repeated more than once in epistles which are addressed to (*hagiois*) the fairs. This may appear to be an argument of little weight, but I think it deserves to be mentioned—These children were such as were yet to be brought ‘up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.’ And tho’ at the time when these epistles

were written they were old enough to understand a command, to obey their parents, yet they might be entirely too young, to have been baptized on a profession of their own faith.

I do not however, lay much stress on it, but in connexion with other things it may serve to cast some light on the subject. And may help to shew us that children as well as grown persons, were included in the Apostolical churches.

It is an observation worthy of notice, that the evidence of infant baptism, does not arise from any single point, nor depend on any single argument, but must be collected from various sources; and although each ray of light may appear weak when separated from the rest, yet the whole when collected in one point of view, is strong enough to exhibit the truth clearly.

QUADRATUS.

43 page vol 2, 15th line for *mathetensate* read *matheteusate*

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FOR THE VIRGINIA RELIGIOUS MAGAZINE.

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PHILANDER TO POLITUS, LETTER III,

SIR,

To prove that piety tends to promote our happiness, I argue, in the first place, from that pure and exquisite pleasure which flows immediately from the very exercise of pious affections.

It is even a trite observation, that every benevolent affection of the human heart, is accompanied with a degree of pleasure. A little careful attention to what passes within his own breast, will convince any man who has such affections, that this is the case; and, that the pleasure is proportioned to their strength and constancy. Now, piety consists in the exercise and cultivation of the most generous and noble affections, of which our nature is capable; and therefore tends directly, by the very constitution of man, to increase his happiness.

We naturally and invariably find pleasure in the discovery and contemplation of every kind of excellence for which we

possess a taste. But of all kinds of excellence, none affords to a correct taste so pure or so high a delight as that of moral perfection. Is it possible for a virtuous mind to contemplate the character of eminent wisdom and rectitude in a fellow-creature without being conscious of very pleasing emotions? But what is all created excellence compared with that of the infinitely perfect Jehovah? And if we are so much gratified by an acquaintance with men of worth, how much more is the pious mind delighted with the knowledge and adoration of that eternal Being who unites in himself every thing good and glorious, to a degree absolutely beyond our utmost comprehension.

We are capable of loving moral excellence simply for its own sake. We often admire it, with conscious pleasure, in persons long since deceased, or otherwise so situated that we entertain no idea of ever being known or esteemed by them in return. Yet it must be granted that the heart always desires a return, a reciprocation of affection when it is supposed to be attainable. Most men are little aware how greatly their happiness depends on such a mutual intercourse of esteem, good will and confidence. Imagine to yourself an individual, whether placed in the midst of society or not, who feels no respectful nor benevolent regard toward any other being, and who knows that no one feels any such regard toward him. Can such a person be happy? The mind instinctively revolts from the idea of such a situation, and can scarcely form a notion of any state more completely wretched. Probably it is a law of all intelligent creatures that their happiness depends essentially upon a reciprocation of kind affection. Perhaps the eternal and infinite blessedness of the triune God may arise from something of the same kind, from the mutual love of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. But however this may be, it is not a distant unregarding Being whom the humble Christian loves and adores: it is his God, his Father, and his Friend. The great object of all true religion is to restore and carry to perfection this happy intercourse between God

and his creatures, this communion of love, -which we have lost by our apostacy, and without which we cannot but be forever miserable. It would not indeed be strictly proper to say that God loves his children in return for their love to him. For it is his grace that begins this blessed work in us, when by our sins we have become altogether averse from it ; and effectually carries it on amidst ten thousand obstacles. To him therefore, and not to us, is the praise justly due. I only assert the fact that true piety does imply a habitual intercourse of mutual love between God and the pious soul. The pious man is the friend of God !

Love to God begins with a high and cordial esteem of his character. This sentiment, though it is and must be the fruit of divine grace in us, yet falls in directly with our natural propensity to know, to admire and to be connected with perfection, especially perfection of the moral kind. Limited as the mind of man is, it seems to have a grasp of desire which nothing short of infinite excellence can completely satisfy. Let the degrading and stupifying thralldom of sensual pursuits and gratifications be once broken ; let man begin to feel the capacities of his own soul, and to understand the dignified felicity for which his nature was at first formed ; he now looks around in eager search for an object where he may explore perfection without limits and ever new, and where he may, without restraint, pour fourth all his admiration. The world affords no such object : all is imperfection here. But in the infinite and unchangeable perfections of the ever blessed God, his power, wisdom, goodness, holiness, justice and truth, and especially in the glorious gospel of his mercy to perishing sinners, the pious man finds a boundless field for the most delightful contemplation. With wonder and adoration he studies the divine attributes. And though it is not possible *by searching to find out the Almighty to perfection*, yet he tastes an exquisite pleasure in tracing his footsteps in the works of creation, and in the dispensations of his providence and grace.

The more he learns of God, the greater is his esteem of him and delight in him. And in connection with this delight the pious soul enjoys the inexpressibly precious persuasion that he himself is the object of divine approbation and complacency. For we know that God is pleased with his own holy image wherever it appears. The image of God indeed, even in the most advanced saint upon earth, is surrounded with much imperfection. Yet every real saint is in some measure, as the Apostle expresses it, *a partaker of the divine nature*; and consequently an object of the complacential love of God. The saints delight in the Lord their God, and he delights in them. Precious communion! What can the world afford to make us happy in comparison with this? What are the wealth, the honours and the grandeur of this fleeting world, compared with the approving smile and friendship of God? Let sober reason answer this question.

Again: love to God includes benevolence toward him. God exercises benevolence toward us in the most strict and proper sense. We are indebted to his bounty for every good thing we enjoy, and for all our hopes of future felicity. But the happiness of God is independent, and incapable of increase. Our benevolence toward him therefore can only mean a disposition to be pleased and rejoice that he is thus perfectly happy. And from the very terms I have been obliged to use in describing this branch of love to God, it is evident that it is a pleasurable sentiment of the mind. It belongs to the nature of man, unless the heart be hardened by an excessive and criminal self love, *to rejoice with them that do rejoice*, and to find an important part of his own happiness in contemplating, and, if it be possible, increasing the happiness of others. Surely this position needs no further proof than barely to be presented to view. Must it not then afford very high pleasure to the pious man, who feels himself the object of the boundless good will and beneficence of God, to reflect that his heavenly Father and Friend is perfectly happy *God*

ever all blessed for ever ? Yes, amidst the confusion and miseries which overwhelm this poor world, it affords unspeakable consolation to the pious and benevolent mind to know that there is a Being, the just and good Governor of the universe, the greatest and the best of beings, who is infinitely exalted in glory and felicity ; whose perfect bliss no storms nor changes can ever disturb or diminish for a single moment and who shall assuredly continue thus glorious and happy to all eternity.

Gratitude for favours conferred is a dictate of our nature, and an essential part of love to God. All men feel it their duty to thank their benefactors ; and join at once in condemning him who receives a benefit without grateful sensibility. And that gratitude is a delightful feeling, every one whose heart has been melted by kindness sufficiently knows. *It is indeed more blessed to give than to receive.* But next to the pleasure of giving is that of receiving an unmerited benefit with a thankful heart. I grant also that a sense of obligation to our fellow-creatures is often rather painful than pleasant ; nor is it difficult to assign the reasons. We sometimes suspect the motives by which men are induced to oblige us. Their beneficence is frequently attended with cutting reproaches and upbraidings of our unworthiness. And we often have disagreeable apprehensions that we may be disposed to severe humiliations in future by the favours we receive. But none of these circumstances apply to the mercies bestowed by our heavenly Benefactor. *He giveth liberally, and upbraideth not.* The pious man lives under a habitual impression of his obligations to God, *the giver of every good gift*, for life and all its comforts. But especially his heart melts with fervent gratitude to God for the unspeakable gift of his dear Son, by whose obedience unto death, he is delivered from deserved and eternal misery, and made an heir of a blessed immortality. Is it possible to doubt whether such impressions and sentiments as these tend to promote the happiness of the man in whose bosom they dwell ? with you, I presume, it is not possible. But I shall

have occasion to consider the happy tendency of pious gratitude more at large in a future part of this discussion.

Under love to God I included a longing desire of more full and perfect communion with him. You will perhaps object to this branch of pious affection, that any ungratified desire is so much pain. The objection does indeed prove that the Christian's happiness in the enjoyment of God is far from being complete : a fact which every Christian very sensibly feels. But it by no means proves that the desire is on the whole painful ; or that it mars the pleasure which he derives from the exercises of piety in other respects. The desire of a pious soul to be more intimately united to God receives a sweet portion of its gratification even now, a delightful earnest of the promised inheritance. And it is at the same time a most animating evidence to the Christian that he is ripening for that blessed state where every obstacle shall be removed, and he shall know love and enjoy God perfectly, without interruption, for ever and ever.

But is not the fear of God a painful feeling ? The apprehension of his wrath and curse is doubtless exceedingly painful. But this fear, though it is often useful in the introduction to a life of piety, is no essential part of piety itself. We speak of that filial reverence of God which his people feel, and by which they are so repeatedly characterized in the scriptures : that sacred delicacy of offending their heavenly Father, which is the fruit of their love to him, and one of the best guards of their obedience to his laws. In this sense we always fear whomsoever we love. But surely there is no pain in this fear, but rather pleasure. Does a dutiful child find it painful to reverence a worthy and beloved parent ? Does he not feel a conscious pleasure in it ? In a word, as pious fear is the immediate offspring of love to God, it intimately partakes of all the properties of love ; as all pious men know by happy experience.

As to trust in God, surely no laboured argument is necessary to show that it is an exercise of mind highly delightful ;

Our weakness and our wants, as well as our social nature, prompt us to seek proper objects for the exercise of our confidence. We instinctively love to pour out our feelings and desires into the bosom of a faithful friend, who feels a lively interest in all our concerns, and on whose wisdom and ability and promise we may safely rely for protection and the promotion of our happiness. Is not this one of the most endearing qualities of friendship and of love. Is there a man, possessed of any sensibility of heart, who has never felt this kind of pleasure. If then the exercise of confidence in frail and changeable mortals makes so great a part of the best enjoyments of this life, how great must be the pleasure of the Christian while he commits himself with unlimited confidence to the faithful care of his God. Our fellow-creatures are every way insufficient to be the objects of our highest trust. We have sometimes distresses and wants which it is not proper to communicate to them. We are surrounded with dangers from which they cannot guard us. We have interests, which they are neither wise nor powerful enough to manage effectually for us. And therefore, *cursed is the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, so that his heart departeth from the Lord. But blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is.* In him the pious soul finds love unchangeable, wisdom unbounded, and everlasting strength. To this God and Father he commits himself with all his cares, and especially his everlasting interests; and tastes even now an inexpressible peace and tranquility in relying upon those exceeding great and precious promises which he has given in Christ Jesus to his people. I am aware that there are men, great philosophers too, and champions of reason, according to their own account, who treat with sneers of ridicule the whole doctrine of piety and communion with God. Many a bitter sarcasm and much pompous declamation have been employed to prove that experimental religion is all an empty dream of ignorance and superstition. If I forbear to call these boasting philosophers men of corrupt minds, I believe you will agree with me

that they are at least men of very loose and superficial habits of thinking on this subject. They ask, how can we love a Being whom we never saw; or rationally talk of a habitual and intimate intercourse with a Spirit? Permit me for a moment to ask such an objector whether he has a friend whom he loves, and in whose company he takes delight? I take it for granted that he answers in the affirmative. Now what is it that he loves? is it the stature, the particular form, the visible complexion of his friend? No, it is his mind; a substance as absolutely invisible as God himself. The exterior person is indeed sometimes called an object of love, but only in a remote and figurative sense, as it is the instrument by which we become acquainted with the attributes of the mind which dwells within. A perfect statue may please the beholder, but never excites his love. And may we not obtain, do we not in fact possess as perfect evidence of the existence, the omnipresence, the goodness, and other attributes of the invisible God, as we have of the existence and attributes of each other? And consequently, are not our pious affections toward him as completely rational as any affections of our hearts whatever. As to the way in which this sacred intercourse is conducted on God's part, it cannot be rendered very intelligible to those who have nothing of the love of God in their hearts. But it may nevertheless be a very certain and real thing; as every pious man knows, to his joy, that it is. Do we doubt the reality of our sight, because one born blind cannot be made to understand its nature? God draws near to his people by the instrumentality of his word, and the effectual agency of his Holy Spirit. But irreligious men look on his word with frigid indifference, and of the effects of his Spirit's agency in enlightening, transforming, strengthening and comforting the soul, they neither know nor desire to know any thing. *He that loveth me, says our blessed Lord, shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him; and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.* Sweet pro-

mises, which the humble Christian finds made good to him every day.

In fine, piety may justly be called the proper element of human nature, in which it was appointed to exercise its faculties, and to find its true and everlasting felicity. Sin is in every point of view a perversion of our powers, and tends inevitably to our degradation and misery. Before sin entered into the world it was doubtless as natural to man to seek communion with God, and to find in it his best enjoyments, as it was to seek the food by which his animal life was sustained. The religious principles of our nature are now indeed deplorably counteracted and overwhelmed by irregular appetites and passions. But they are not utterly extinguished: nor can scarcely any degree of depravity altogether prevent their occasional appearance as parts of our original constitution. Man without communion with God is out of his native sphere of activity; wandering from the path of peace in the devious mazes of folly and destruction. And there is something within his own bosom that often tells him so; though few, alas, listen as they ought to the admonition.

These reflections I submit to your candid and serious consideration. And with earnest wishes that you may have a more impressive proof of their truth than any I can give you, even that of your own delightful experience, I subscribe myself, &c.

PHILANDER.

 SOME OBSERVATIONS ON PROV. I. 10.

‘ *My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.*’

MAN was formed by God a social creature. The law of his nature prompts him to unite with his fellow creatures ; and every enjoyment is heightened by a communication with others. “ Nothing is agreeable to me (*said Cicero*) without a companion ; for without a friend, life is nothing.” But as a great part of human happiness depends upon our connection with one another, and flows from this intercourse, so through the corruption of our hearts, many of the evils and calamities into which we fall, much of the guilt which is our reproach, and many of the misfortunes which are consequent upon it, take their rise in, and are increased by the very same means. The dangerous influence which wicked companions have upon the mind, naturally so prone to evil, is obvious to all. It was long since observed by Epictetus, which is quoted by Saint Paul, that ‘ Evil communication corrupt good manners ;’ and the unhappy experience of many a man, and of young and incautious persons above all, affords a fatal proof of this, both to themselves and others. As soon as we begin to take any active part in life, so soon do we begin to fall into connexion with particular kinds of company, and to be influenced by it. And as our natural inclination is on the side of vice ; as good company is not very willing to admit every one into its intimacy that may fall in the way, & as the bad are forward & obtrusive, ever ready to seduce the unwary youth ; how fatally apt is he to fall into this dangerous snare ! The practice, upon which this observation is grounded, is so common, that perhaps for that very reason it may be little noticed. But it is a matter of the greatest consequence to all ; to those who are acting for themselves in the world, and daily mingling with mankind in the busy scenes of life ; to those who have the care of rearing

the young, and to the young themselves, who are beginning to form habits, and attach themselves to company, the effects of which they may feel as long as they live, and to all eternity.

Youth is the forming period of life. The young are the hope of our country and of the church of God. Let me therefore exhort my young readers in a particular manner, to a serious application and attention to the subject of this discourse.

The words are a counsel from heaven written by the inspired King of Israel, and directed to the young. He had experienced the sad consequences of not having attended to this direction, and was therefore the more solicitous to urge it upon the rising generation. This book of Proverbs seems to have them as a particular object of attention, as the writer well knew the importance of the principles imbibed and the habits formed at this early season of life. The text is an earnest and affectionate caution against the society of evil doers, or at least against a compliance with their sinful and pernicious ways.—

‘ My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.’

Sin is rebellion against God; and sinners revolt from his righteous authority when they transgress his laws. And there is a principle in corrupted human nature, which leads the wicked to look for some support and consolation, from associating others with them in their crimes; as if it would lessen the aggravation of their guilt; or alleviate their sense of shame and misery here and hereafter, to have as many as possible in the same situation. Hence they are always solicitous to ensnare and corrupt others. Like the Devil, whom they serve in this infernal agency, they cannot endure the sight of more innocence than they themselves possess. As he tempted Adam, so do they ensnare and deceive as many of the young and unsuspecting as they can. They place flattering allurements before them—overcome their modesty and ingenious temper by ridicule—instil poisonous principles into them—and familiarize them by degrees to such horrid examples, that at length they become so deeply involved, as not only to practice

with pleasure what they once shuddered at with horror ; but become unable to resist the indulgences which have become inveterate by habit. Against this danger the caution of the text is addressed, 'Consent thou not.' Avoid their allurements—steadily withstand their scorn—hearken not to their sophistical and delusive pleadings in favor of vice—and abhor their abominable practices and examples.

The danger of associating with bad company is so obvious that wise and good men in every age have been observing it ; and it has a place in the tables and proverbs (which are generally the result of experience) of every nation. Who that will reflect but a moment can be ignorant of it ? Take an example of any vicious and debauched character of your acquaintance, whom you have known under different circumstances, and you will be able perhaps to recollect the society or scenes of vice, where he was seduced and initiated into licentious practices. We are all by nature bad enough, but it requires assistance to become as dreadfully wicked as some do. Vicious society is therefore ever ready to afford this assistance by the allurements which they exhibit before one another. This is called *enticing*. The heart of man naturally thirsts for pleasure, and where the understanding is blinded, the choice of this will ever be unhappily wrong. The passions of the young are so impetuous, and so easily hurried into excesses, that it is the business and care of wise parents, masters, and guardians, to endeavor to restrain them, and to keep them as much as possible from those scenes and objects which tend to inflame them. But profane and wicked companions are studious to please them in such circumstances as will most naturally seduce them into vicious pleasures. They paint these in the fairest colours they are able—describe the pleasure they enjoy in the pursuit of those gratifications—throw opportunities in their way—invite them to scenes of dissipation and riotous amusement, and never cease to solicit and urge them, till they get them involved in the same criminality with themselves. The sacred name of friendship is prostituted in these

sinful combinations for vice; and under a false garb of kindness and indulgence to their passions, they betray the unsuspecting inexperienced youth into the most vicious courses. Many who have perished miserably by the hand of justice, have given an awful account of their first seductions by the bowl, and the obscenity of riotous companions. 'O my soul, come not thou into their secret; mine honour, be not thou united with them!'

The danger of bad company will be further manifest by considering the ridicule that is often employed, by which unprincipled associates too frequently obtain a victory over the reluctant modesty of many an ingenious young man. A sense of shame, that is of being despised by the company we converse with, is very strong in the human breast. It was wisely placed in our constitution by God, to be a fence and guard to virtue. But this excellent principle is perverted by that unhappy engine of vice, the ridicule of things sacred, and even decent as well as the profession of them. This is hard to withstand even by the best, who therefore avoid such company. How dangerous then must it be to those whose principles are not fixed! This is more successful because it attacks religion and virtue by falshood and misrepresentation. Reason is not employed as an instrument in making the assault, but some sarcastic sneer, calculated to raise the laugh against the person who still preserves some remains of goodness. How dreadful will the effect of this be in corrupt society, to hurry persons away contrary to their better judgment, for fear of being reproached as mean and unworthy the regard of the company! Another consequence flowing from the same source is the pernicious principles which practised sinners endeavor to instil into others. Such persons are not contented with their own wickedness, but they plead for sin in general, and make it their constant endeavor to destroy the influence of conscience, and awaken every sentiment of moral duty, both in themselves and others. Like their father the Devil, who could not rest till he ruined a world of innocent beings, and that too by a lie;

so these unhappy persons, being slaves to sin, find their principal pleasure in seducing others, by giving false representations of sin and duty. They take much pains to varnish these in false colours. Drunkenness and debauchery they are apt to call good fellowship. But what sort of fellowship can there be where people have lost their senses? Filthy and obscene discourse is called the free language of nature, and lewd practices the indulgence of love. Profanity and contemptible jesting upon things sacred is called wit; and anger and revenge is spirit and honor with them. And there are some so abandoned in principle that they often plead for these under their proper names; and effect to think it strange, that their Creator has endowed them with any disposition or propensity which it is unlawful for them to indulge in the most unlimited manner. On the contrary, the duties, which are the honor of man and support of society, are represented under different colors. Temperance and chastity are attributed to stinginess and the want of spirit; a regard to decency and religion, is called bigotry and superstition; a patient temper and forgiveness of injuries, are called cowardice and mean spiritedness; prayer and praise, with them, is the whining cant of hypocrisy; and the necessary restraints of parents and teachers, an intolerable burden unfit for the noble spirits of free men. In a word, the whole strain of such conversation is an illusion put upon the mind, which often enslaves young persons, and totally depraves their morals, before they are aware how far they are gone. Then to complete the horrid work in which they have so assiduously labored, they at length endeavor to destroy all distinction between virtue and vice, by infusing the baneful principles of infidelity. For until this is done, the conscience will be uneasy.

But it is not only from what they hear, that bad company becomes dangerous, but also from the pernicious examples which they see. Many do not know how wicked it is possible for men to be, until they mingle in their society. At first a comparatively innocent person will be struck with horror at

hearing and seeing such examples. But in time they have their effect. We are imitative creatures, and prone to do as our neighbors do. We adopt the sentiments, the language, and the practices, with which we are much conversant. This is the case in bad company, until they who are initiated into it, lose all the little good they ever had, and obtain nothing in return, but the horrid privilege of becoming one of the number. Now when we reflect how unsuspecting young persons are, and suppose them in the midst of all the dangers I have mentioned what can be supposed more dreadfully dangerous: And add to this, our natural propensity to sin, and what must be the prospect to a young person, or indeed to any other, who mixes habitually, and of *choice* with such company! Habit will at length confirm, what accident at first begun, until we may say of them, 'Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the Leopard his spots, then may they who are accustomed to do evil learn to do well.'

I might here finish the observations which were intended to be made, if it did not appear reasonable, after having pointed out a danger, to endeavor to suggest some method for avoiding it. Let me therefore, intreat my readers, especially the young, to give attention to the following considerations.

1. Consider your natural weakness and liability to imposition. You may think yourselves able to withstand the ensnarements to which you are exposed, but it is a wrong apprehension, for one is seldom in greater danger, than when he feels the most confidence and presumption in himself. Corrupt pleasures, to which our depraved appetites are so strongly inclined, act like an opiate, and gently stupefy the faculties of the mind, and render it indisposed to make resistance. Many a man has ventured into bad company, with a determination in his own mind that he would not yield to their pernicious ways, who has been gradually drawn to the commission of crimes, at which he would once have shuddered; and some have even become ringleaders in vice, who on their first approaches to it, apprehended themselves principled against its

allurements. Let me therefore intreat you to be sensible of your danger, from your inexperience, and be willing to be instructed by the example of others, without making the trial for yourselves. Why are parents and guardians so anxious for you, but because they know the dangerous precipice on which you stand? Will you rather think a profligate companion regards your interest, when he indulges your pleasures, and conceals it from your friends? Can you imagine that he loves you, and regards your happiness with equal tenderness as they do, who have nursed you with parental care in your infancy, and fondly cherished you at the expence of their own ease and quiet? Let me then impress the caution, 'Consent thou not.' Avoid the society of the wicked as you would the approach of a venomous serpent, and endeavor upon all occasions to associate with the good. If they should appear scrupulous in admitting you at first, be not discouraged, for still you may succeed by perseverance. They will gladly welcome you as a companion, as soon as they shall have sufficient evidence, that you are really desirous of their friendship. Be not then like the kid, which, when charged by her mother to open the door to no one, before she had looked out at the window, ridiculed her as being over-cautious; but afterwards became an easy prey to the flattering insinuations of the wolf, for not attending to the salutary advice.

2. Consider how pernicious those practices are in their own nature, which you are liable to contract by associating with bad company. Profligacy of manners and the love of carnal pleasures, have a direct tendency to depress any noble exertion of the mind, to chain it down in perpetual ignorance, and by degrees, to render the truth itself disgusting. How many young men have you known, who from their birth and talents, might have aspired to the highest offices in government, that have suffered their geniuses to lie wholly uncultivated, from having been seduced by some debauched companions; And we often find, even in youth, such obstinacy in vice, that whoever would oppose their favorite passions is viewed with a

jealous eye ; and instead of hearkening to the admonitions of their best friends, who would gladly save them from the paths of destruction, they stop their ears, and think all their advice is only in opposition to their pleasures. Thus their consciences become more and more hardened in sin, until they have neither inclination nor power to reform their manners. Not being furnished with ideas and sentiments to render them fit companions in sensible and improving conversation, they will feel out of their element, when they are not roaring and swearing with their lewd associates in some tavern, or other haunt of debauchery. But I would beg you to think of the light in which the characters of veterans in sin, are viewed by others of decent character. Would you be willing for your society and conversation to be shunned as pestiferous, by all people of sobriety and modesty? But if you cannot be influenced by the opinion of others, remember, that by your practices, your bodies will be finally overwhelmed with disease and wretchedness ; and the estates, which have been procured for you by the diligence and industry of your ancestors, will be wasted in riotous dissipation, and you probably left to the pity or scorn of those on whom you formerly looked down with contempt. For, as a late writer has elegantly expressed it, " However innocent and free from direct immorality worldly pleasure may appear, however fascinating her garb ; however soft and insinuating her smiles and persuasions ; however numerous and fashionable her votaries ; yet if you suffer yourselves to be allured by the flattering voice of this siren, she will insensibly conduct you into those regions of misery and despair, whence few return to recite the doleful tale of her fatal delusions."

3. Permit me in the last place to urge you to consider the claim that God has upon your obedience. This will be the most effectual security against the evil, from which I would dissuade you. He has endowed you with all the noble powers of mind by which you are distinguished from the inferior creation ; he has protected you by his providence in innumera-

ble instances from your childhood to the present day ; he has graciously connected your duty and happiness together, and taught you that sin will infallibly be followed by punishment ; and as if all these things were small, he has given his only begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who died for our sins and rose again for our justification. Ought you not then to love, honour, and obey him ? Or will you rather employ all the privileges he has bestowed upon you in rebelling against him, and ruining yourselves ? No, rather endeavor to obtain habits of real piety. For let me assure you upon the authority of God's word, and long observation, that true religion and virtue are the ready road to health of body, peace and tranquility of mind, wealth and public credit. "Length of days is in her right hand, and in her left hand riches and honor." But what will libertinism end in, but the total ruin both of soul and body here and hereafter ?

QUINTUS.

FOR THE VIRGINIA RELIGIOUS MAGAZINE.

VIVAX AND PAULINUS.—A DIALOGUE:

VIVAX and PAULINUS, are young gentlemen, who at present reside in the same neighborhood ; they were educated together and have kept up a friendly intercourse ever since the commencement of their studies. They have enjoyed the same religious privileges, tho' their improvement has, until lately, been very dissimilar : as will appear from the following dialogue.

Vivax. I AM happy to see you this evening, my good friend Paulinus. I have just heard a discourse from your favourite Preacher Eusebious, with which I conjecture, you would have been agreeably entertained, and not a little edified, had you been one of the audience.

Paulinus. I am sorry I could not attend : but hope from your account of the sermon, that it has not been unprofitable to you.

V. Truly sir, I have often met with less entertainment from the pulpit: but as to any advantage from that quarter, you know, that is what I never expect.

P. It grieves me Vivax to find that your prejudices against the gospel and its institutions, remain undiminished: I hope however, that an attention will yet take place, in your opinions, respecting the important subject of religion.

V. No sir, my sentiments are unalterably fixed, I assure you, I object not, however, to the continuance of such a body of men, as the clergy: In the present state of the world they are necessary. Without a belief of the doctrines they inculcate, a large majority of mankind would be entirely ungovernable; nay, the human race would soon be exterminated. Men have not yet risen, to that grade of rational improvement which would make it safe to inform them, that all the alarming denunciations of divine vengeance, which they have been accustomed to hear from the pulpit, have had as their origin the craftiness of Politicians and the avarice of Priests.

P. Is it then your sincere opinion, that the doctrines contained in the Bible are false?

V. Utterly false sir.

P. And yet, you think it necessary that the mass of mankind should believe these doctrines, to be true.

V. So necessary, that the earth would soon be depopulated without such a belief.

P. It appears then to be your opinion, that, a set of Politicians, and avaricious Priests, have most wickedly and presumptuously, contrived a system of false doctrines; and have palmed this system on the world, in the name of God himself, that they might thereby accomplish their wicked designs: and yet that this appears to be the only plan, whereby the world can be governed, or the happiness of mankind promoted. A race of rational creatures, who owe their existence to a Being of inflexible justice, of infinite power, wisdom and goodness, can exist only by the operation of a system of unparalleled fraud and falshood. This statement is indeed astonishing to

me ; and I would be glad to be informed, why men can be better governed, or more easily managed by falshood than by truth. What dreadful condition have men fallen into, which can render deception so salutary and necessary ?

V. Man, sir, has been deluded, by superstitious notions, and the voice of reason has been suppressed.

P. And is there no relief for him, in this unfortunate condition? If a felm has been drawn over his eyes, why should it not be instantly removed? If light is what he wants, in the name of humanity, let him have light. Or, if there is danger apprehended from a sudden blaze; if it is thought that an immediate transition from darkness to light, might be prejudicial to the organs of perception; remove the felm imperceptably, and let him have light, as he may be found able to bear it: but never hope to cure him, by the operation of the cause which made him blind. If the system of Priestcraft has blinded his eyes, let him discover the imposition and be happy.

V. I am persuaded, sir, that were reason disengaged from the superstitious notions, which have been deeply stamped on the minds of men, by what is called a religious education; a principle step would be taken towards the attainment of human felicity.

P. And yet you are an advocate for the continuance of religious instruction; the native tendancy of which is to strengthen and confirm what you call superstitious notions, those clogs of reason, and the insuperable barriers to human happiness.

V. Well sir, I contend no longer; for I confess I have felt considerably hampered, in my attempt to plead the cause of the Clergy. Let them be put to silence.

P. But, my dear sir, you cannot have forgotten what are to be the consequences of such a step. Would you have the human race exterminated.

V. I fear sir, this would be the fatal issue, were they let lose from the restraints imposed on them, by their superstitious notions; but there seems to be no help for them; and

perhaps they had better not exist, than be so intolerably deluded.

P. But you have not yet informed me, why man, in his present condition, is so incapable of deriving any advantage from the truth. It appears to me you will be under the necessity of subscribing to, at least, one doctrine of revelation, I mean *human depravity*.

V. I would be very sorry to subscribe to that gloomy doctrine. No sir, I entertain a more favorable opinion of my fellow-creatures. Were men weighed in an equal balance, their good actions, I am persuaded would more than counterbalance the bad: and their hearts we must charitably suppose, are much better than their actions.

P. And yet, you are persuaded that men with these very good hearts, would massacre one another, were they not restrained by false notions, respecting a future state of rewards & punishments; still therefore, I am under the necessity of repeating my inquiry: What is the reason that the creature, with so good a heart, and so well disposed, can be lead only in the dark? I would certainly have concluded, that the man who is restrained from acts of violence, only by the fear of future punishment, must possess a bad heart; he must be depraved.

V. I cannot consent to call it by so harsh a name, as *depravity*. I must confess however, that were the doctrines of the Bible generally discredited, I fear, few men would be able to confide even in a brother. The perpetration of enormous crimes would soon become common. For this reason I have, of late, thought it prudent to keep my sentiments, on these subjects, pretty much to myself.

P. In this you are certainly right. By all means conceal your discoveries: trust them not with your nearest friend. To divulge them, you know, would be to 'cast fire brands, arrows and death.' But, as we have at length agreed in one thing, perhaps we can agree further. It appears to me, Vivax, that were I of your opinion respecting the condition of the human race; did I believe that thousands were already deceiv-

ed and ruined ; did I view them daily sinking into deeper distress and delusion, without the most distant prospect of relief ; with the small degree of philanthropy I possess, I should be a very unhappy man. But perhaps with your other important discoveries, you have found out some plan, whereby the evils we lament in the present state, will be removed. Perhaps you have been enabled to anticipate the bliss of a future state of existence, where neither error nor vice, nor misery shall ever enter.

V. No sir, to be candid, I cannot pretend to any such discovery. My prospects have been limited to the present world, and my happiest moments have been those, in which my mind has been entirely occupied by temporal concerns ; without a single thought of death, or what may possibly happen to man after death.

P. You have sometimes, however, reflected seriously on those important subjects. May I be permitted to inquire what your future prospects are, in the hour of serious reflection ?

V. You know, Paulinus, that the opinions of Philosophers, respecting a future state, have been very various and fluctuating. And notwithstanding the important discoveries, which some of them pretend to have made ; their most plausible conjectures are involved in such darkness and uncertainty, that after many attempts to confide in them ; my mind has found no relief from fearful fore-bodings respecting a future state of retribution. Nay, the oftener I reflect seriously on the subject, the more gloomy is the prospect, as it respects mankind in general ; and the more terrifying with respect to myself. And, I suppose you will believe me, when I assure you that this is the greatest objection I have to your favorite preachers ; they never fail to lead my mind into a train of the most gloomy ideas respecting a future state.

P. Were I persuaded, Vivax, that preachers are the kind of men you have represented them, I cannot suppose that any

story they could fabricate, would have much influence with me. You speak of them as impostors, and yet feel under their discourses, as though you believed them to be vested with all the authority to which they lay claim.

V. In spite of all my efforts to discredit their doctrines, and to hear them with a callous heart; their words will press upon my mind with irresistible energy. Perhaps this may be the effect of a religious education. I fear, I shall never obtain an entire freedom, from the influence of certain notions, which I imbibed almost with my mother's milk; respecting good and evil, heaven and hell, &c.

P. You are not absolutely certain then, that the statements made to you in early life, on these important subjects, were false.

V. This certainty, sir, is what I have long sought in vain: were I possessed of this, I could bid defiance to any preacher; but in my present wandering condition, the weakest of them sometimes alarm me exceedingly.

P. And yet, in this state of uncertainty, have you not professed yourself an established unbeliever? Have you not attempted to make proselytes to infidelity, as well as to infuse prejudices into the minds of many against the scriptures, and those who explain them?

V. All this I have done; and now confess my guilt in so doing: but whether it will serve to extenuate the offence, or not, I must observe, that these things were often done, as I may say, in self defence. Had I been unmolested by the Bible and its friends, I believe I would not have molested them—as they interrupted my peace, the only weapons in my possession were used, to repel the injury, and procure ease for a troubled mind.

P. What! do you talk of a troubled mind Vivax? Many have supposed, that you unbelievers, were the happiest mortals on earth: and that it was impossible that any one, free from the influence of priestcraft, and Bible prejudices, should be troubled like other men.

V. And we, sir, have uniformly endeavored, to give currency to this false opinion.

P. And yet, you have declaimed loudly against hypocrisy, and every species of insincerity, as the most hateful of all human vices, and, as if they were confined to professors of religion.

V. Yes, but were the truth known, I fear, more hypocrites would be found among professed infidels, than within the pale of the visible church, in proportion to the number of professors, belonging to each of these bodies. Be assured, my friend, it is a difficult thing for a man who *thinks*, to become an established infidel.

P. So I have always thought. But why should any man dissemble here? Hypocrisy, among professors of religion, is a base crime, which, when detected, is justly abhorred: but of all hypocrites, he certainly deserves to be most despised, who pretends to be more wicked than he really is. But perhaps you are unfortunately singular; and others may have obtained that firm persuasion of the truth of their principles, of which you are yet destitute.

V. Ah! Paulinus, you are happily unacquainted with the many fearful forebodings, that necessarily prey upon the minds of unbelievers, I grant, you may meet with many professed infidels, who appear to entertain no doubts upon the subject; but such men are either hypocritical pretenders, or creatures that never think. The larger number of professed infidels, are of the latter description—Rakes and libertines; store-boys, apprentices, and half-thinking young attorneys; whose researches have never extended beyond a *pamphlet*, or a newspaper publication, may be undisturbed by the difficulties which lie in the way of all systems of infidelity. You may believe them, when they tell you, they have no doubts or fears respecting the subject: they have never examined it; perhaps they never will be capable of examining it, until a change takes place in the structure of their intellectual faculties.—And, with respect to men of erudition, it is only necessary to

look into their writings, to discover the marks of prejudice, of a malignant temper, of pride and impatience of control; but rarely will you find a passage that will induce you to believe that its author possessed unshaken confidence in his own doctrines. Notwithstanding my great partiality for these authors, I must confess, I have often been tempted to believe that they wrote, not with the benevolent design of delivering mankind from error, but with a view to convince themselves, that the cause they had espoused, was defensible.

P. That a man should teach others, with a view to convince himself, that the doctrines he inculcates are true, is preposterous enough. Had you known that Eusebius, and other preachers who have so often interrupted your repose, were only preaching to produce conviction in their own minds, you would doubtless have considered them despicable guides.

V. Yes sir, and despicable blind hypocritical guides are the apostles of infidelity, as I have found to my cost.

P. But, to return to the subject you first mentioned, from what text did Eusebius entertain his audience to-day?

V. My recollection will not enable me to give you the words of the text. The object of the preacher, was to describe the future inheritance of the saints; and to confirm their hope, that in due time, they should possess this inheritance. In the prosecution of his plan, the scriptures were his guide. He spoke of heaven, and the rapturous joys of the mingled throng, of saints and angels, who surround the throne of God, as though he had just descended from that glorious assembly. He spoke of exceeding great and precious promises, made to believers, not as if he suspected them to be cunningly devised fables; but manifesting the strongest assurance, that the God of truth had made these promises and confirmed them by his oath; and that they had been sealed by the blood of his only begotten Son: and hence it was inferred, that they were calculated to afford strong consolation to those who fly for refuge to the hope of the gospel. I confess the sermon hath made a deep impression on my mind. What a fool have I

been to suppose, that Christians were rendered unhappy by their religion. When I now compare the Christian's prospects, with the frigid system of infidelity, and the thick darkness and despair, in which this system leaves its advocates, in the time of trial—in the hour of death—I blush and am thunderstruck. Alas ! that I should ever have opposed the glorious doctrines of the grace of God ; and endeavored to establish in their room, doctrines of unparalleled stupidity, presumption and wickedness.

P. I rejoice unfeignedly, my friend, at the change which has so unexpectedly taken place in your sentiments. I hope, that after a careful, candid examination, you will not hesitate to subscribe to the peculiar doctrines of christianity, which you have hitherto so strenuously opposed ; and that you will find in the gospel, a remedy for the evils which you have seen, and lamented ; but for which you were ready to conclude, no remedy could be found.

V. As for the doctrines of the Bible, sir, I have acted towards them, as most of my deluded brethren have acted. I have opposed them without knowing what they were ; always taking care to view them through a wrong medium. All the distinct knowledge I have had of the Bible, amounted to this, It condemned me to endless misery as an inexcusable sinner. And with respect to the prospect of relief from the deplorable condition in which sin has placed us ; I am now so far persuaded of the sufficiency of the gospel plan, that my earnest prayer to God is, ' Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.'—The sun now disappeared and the dialogue ended.

S

TO THE EDITORS OF THE VIRGINIA RELIGIOUS MAGAZINE.

GENTLEMEN,

Some time ago I had the opportunity of perusing the celebrated Bryant's "Observations upon the plagues of Egypt." I endeavoured to compress the substance of this work into a small compass for the benefit of a friend with whom I then corresponded. Perusing these letters not long since, it occurred to me that, as Mr. Bryant's Book is very little known in this part of the country, they would make one or two, not unuseful numbers for your Magazine.

Yours, &c.

P.

November 26th, 1801.

I HAVE lately perused a little volume from which I have derived much useful information, and much rational enjoyment. I wish you to participate with me. The acquisition of useful knowledge affords a pleasure more noble, and more highly exalted than all those amusements, which are so eagerly sought in the giddy circles of dissipation. I congratulate you, that at an early age you have been taught to seek those pleasures, which leave nothing behind them; and especially that you are anxious to understand the Scriptures, "which are able to make you wise unto salvation."

The book which I have lately read is entitled "*Observations upon the plagues inflicted upon the Egyptians.*" The subject is treated with much ability; and I think that much light is thrown upon the part of Scripture, containing the account of these dispensations of Providence.

People commonly consider these plagues merely as awful judgments from the hand of God, intended for the purpose of compelling Pharoah to 'let the children of Israel go.' But had this been the only object, the Almighty could have easily inclined him at once to permit them to depart. Others go

a step farther, and suppose that the Lord intended, not only to rescue his chosen people from the Egyptian yoke, but also to manifest his mighty power, and prove that he was the only wise and true God. The author of these observations, however, thinks, that in every plague there was a peculiar meaning and significancy, and that each of them was aimed at some idolatrous custom which the God of Israel intend to reprove and to punish. I design in as short a compass as possible to give you the reasons for this opinion. The plague first recorded is that of the river Nile turned into blood. This would have been an awful event to any nation: but it was peculiarly so to the Egyptians. Many ancient people were in the habit of paying religious worship to rivers; as the Medes, the Parthians, the Sarmatians, the Grecians, &c. but none carried their reverence to a height so extravagant as the Egyptians. Their river was their chief national God, and they commonly addressed it with the appellation of Father or Savior. There was therefore great suitability in the judgment brought upon this people by the instrumentality of Moses. They must have felt the utmost horror and astonishment, when they beheld their sacred stream thus polluted; the divinity which they worshipped thus changed. This might also serve as a warning to the Israelites not to fall into this species of idolatry.

But farther, the Almighty might have polluted the river in various ways, and thus put to shame these idolators: but he chose to turn it into blood. The Egyptians, and their Priests in particular, were remarkably nice in their external appearance, and had the greatest abhorrence for blood; by the least stain of gore they thought themselves deeply polluted. The priests were, on this account, making continual ablutions. Twice every day, and twice every night they were obliged by law to bathe in their sacred stream. Accidents would cause them to repeat these washings much oftener. The evil, then, must have been severely felt, because, "There was blood in all the land of Egypt." This judgement was therefore directed

against the abominable idolatries, and superstitious rites of these people,*

* In order to make what has been said respecting this plague more intelligible to common readers, it may be proper to make some observations relative to the river Nile. It is observed in the remarks on the seventh plague that there is no rain in Egypt. To other countries this circumstance would be totally ruinous. But the want of rain is amply compensated by the overflowing of the Nile: The face of the country is very level, and the water overspreads it to a vast distance. The ground is thus effectually watered; and upon the falling of the river, a rich mud is left behind, in which the grain is sown, and from which it springs up with surprising quickness: The fertility of the land is so great, that Egypt has been called the granary of the world. This is owing wholly to the Nile; and hence arose the foolish custom of paying religious homage to the river. In some seasons the river does not rise high enough; and in others it rises too high. In either case the consequences are very destructive. This probably caused this besotted people to be much more attentive to the sacred stream than otherwise they would have been. The cause of the annual overflowing of the Nile, though long thought to be an undiscoverable secret, is now perfectly ascertained. The source of the river is at a great distance from Egypt, in the interior of Africa: and though there is no rain in Egypt, it falls abundantly about the sources of the Nile. The climate in that country is just such as it is in the East-Indies, where the only distinction of seasons is into wet and dry. For nearly six months every year there is almost a perpetual deluge of water poured upon the earth. The sources of the Nile receive these torrents; which all united into one mighty stream flow down and cover the land of Egypt. The country looks like a sea, with numerous cities and villages interspersed. During this overflow the people pay visits, and pass from place to place in boats, kept for this purpose.

The sacred history informs us, that 'the fish in the river died, and the river stank.' There was something more in this punishment than merely the stench of putred fish; although this was particularly loathsome to the Egyptians, who had such an abhorrence to all animal corruption. Not only the river, but even the fish, which lived in it were esteemed sacred. The priests would never taste fish on account of their imputed sanctity. The punishment then was just suited to their crime. How must they have been confounded, and terrified to see the river which they worshipped, thus polluted, their land defiled, and themselves almost poisoned by their stinking Deities.

The Egyptians were hereby taught that the Gods whom they worshipped were no Gods. This plague reached to the land of Goshan, that the Israelites might be warned to avoid the idolatrous practices of the Egyptians. And this was more proper, because in the neighborhood of Canaan, whither the Israelites were going, fish Deities were worshipped. The Dagon of the Philistines was one of these. This worship extended through Syria, and was in use in the borders of Lebanon, at Ascalon, at Ashdod, and at Joppa. It was intended, therefore, that the Israelites should be disgusted with such idolatry, that they might not fall into it, when settled in the land which the Lord should give them.

The second plague was that of the Frogs. Concerning this, it is unnecessary to make many observations. By reading the account in Exodus you will find that the frogs filled the river, and covered all the land of Egypt. This evil, like the former arose from their sacred river, in which they confided, and of the sanctity of which they had so high an opinion. Both the stream and the temples were polluted and disgraced, to the confusion of the priests, and no one could cleanse himself from the corruption. Besides this, the frog was considered as a sacred emblem of a Deity worshipped among the Egyptians, and a further intention of this plague was to give the people a disgust to those false Deities which they so blindly worshipped.

The third plague was that of the Lice. It has been already remarked, that the Egyptians affected great external purity, and were very nice in their persons and clothing. Uncommon care was taken that they might not harbour vermin of any kind. For this purpose the priests never wore any but linen garments. For the same reason, as an old historian informs us, they shaved their heads and bodies every third day. Many other circumstances might be mentioned to show in what abhorrence the Egyptians held these vermin, and with what care they were avoided. The essentials of their religion were placed in cleanliness. They made a great show of delicacy to the world; but in their temples, the most filthy, and abominable actions were daily committed. The most unnatural practices were carried on by their priests in the very shrines of their holy places. This judgement was therefore extremely proper. It was a suitable punishment upon them for making a great show of external purity, when, in truth, they were the filthiest of mankind. The priests and magicians were sensible of this; and the punishment was so well directed that they were constrained to exclaim 'This is the finger of God.'

The fourth plague was the plague of flies. The flies which came upon the Egyptians were formidable, both on account of their number, and the smart of their stings.* It appears,

* In the countries bordering upon Egypt, in Ethiopia, Nubia, &c. there appears at particular seasons a species of fly, called by the natives *Zimb*, a little larger than a bee; the buzzing of which, as soon as heard, excites in all the beasts of the country, the most dreadful terror; and they run wildly about until they die worn out with fatigue and hunger. The puncture of this fly raises a kind of humour, which inflames and putrifies, to the certain destruction of the cattle. Nothing can stand before them; when they appear, troops of elephants and all the wild beasts of Africa, are seen running in every direction, showing every sign of the greatest horror, and dis-

from ancient history, that many nations, and among these the Egyptians worshipped particular Deities, which, as they supposed, defended them against particular evils. Thus some defended the people from fevers, and others from fear; some from birds, and others from flies. Among the nations descended from the Egyptians, there were many Gods whose province it was to drive away flies. It is, then, highly probable that the Egyptians had such Deities too. But this was not all. They actually worshipped a fly. Baalzebub was one of these *Fly Gods*. The propriety, therefore, of punishing the Egyptians by such a plague is evident. And it is not to be supposed that the punishment was not grievous. Several instances are upon record of places rendered uninhabitable by flies. It may be remarked here that the children of Israel were sufferers, in the three former plagues. This might have been done for two purposes. The one to give the Israelites a disgust to the objects of Egyptian worship, the other to convince them that there was no illusion in these wonderful events. In the following plagues the Egyptians suffered alone; lest they should suppose that there was nothing particular in these judgments, and so refuse to let the children of Israel go.

The fifth plague was the murrain of beasts. The peculiar propriety of inflicting this judgment upon the Egyptians will be plainly seen, when it is known that this besotted people regarded with religious veneration the lion, wolf, dog, camel, ass, cow, cat, ape, and goat. Bulls and heifers were maintained in their temples, and worshipped as Deities. But the murrain swept away these Gods that lived upon grass and hay, and taught the Egyptians that the God of Israel was the only true God.

The sixth plague was that of boils and blains. This like the others that preceded was particularly calculated to con-

may. The only remedy is to fly to the sandy deserts, where the fly never comes. — These observations may show how formidable was the plague of flies.

found the Egyptians, and confirm the faith of the Israelites. The latter by being entirely exempt from it, might have their confidence in the God of their Fathers confirmed, while the impotence of the Egyptian Deities was strikingly manifested. Many of the Gods to whom they paid great reverence were supposed to preside over medicine. To these the people trusted in all their maladies. The physicians were commonly priests of the Gods of medicine, and pretended to cure the sick by their influence. It pleased God, therefore, to bring upon them a sore and greivous plague, which neither their Gods could cure nor their physicians alleviate. The Creator of the world might have punished these people by earthquakes, volcanoes, or terrible inundations; but these would not have been sufficiently significant. The plagues inflicted by the Almighty were intended not only to punish the Egyptians, but to show the baseness of their worship, and the foolishness of their confidence in those whom they trusted. There was something in the manner in which this plague was inflicted, which deserves notice. Moses and Aaron were commanded to take ashes of the furnace, and scatter them towards Heaven, that they might be wafted over the land. This command was highly significant. The furnace was a striking type of the bondage of the Israelites; and of all the miseries which they suffered in Egypt. This might convince the Egyptian tyrants that they were punished on account of the cruelties which they exercised on an innocent people. But farther, it was a custom among the inhabitants of Egypt, at particular seasons, to sacrifice *men* on a high altar: the Priests then collected the ashes and wafted them towards heaven, that wherever they fell a blessing might attend the people. In reproof of this horrid rite, Moses was commanded to scatter ashes towards the Heavens, that wherever the winds wafted them, they might prove a curse. The Supreme Being does all things in wisdom and righteousness.

The seventh plague, was that of rain, hail, and fire, attended with thunder. It is remarkable, that in Egypt there is no

rain, so that some of the ancient writers characterise it as a "country without showers." When therefore, Moses foretold, that on the following day, there should be a grievous rain, attended with hail, and thunder, it was an event, of all others the most incredible to an Egyptian; and when it did take place, the Egyptians must have perceived themselves particularly aimed at in these fearful events so contrary to past experience. But farther still, these people were extremely superstitious, and greatly addicted to the observance of portentous appearances. Every uncommon circumstance was judged to be of this kind. But as these were imaginary portents, which arose merely from superstitious dread, it pleased God to punish them by some realities, to which they never were witnesses before. And the punishment by fire and water, was extremely proper, because the Egyptians were guilty of the grossest idolatry towards these elements. Under the character of Iris, they worshipped all fluids, and under that of Aieris, the contrary element. It was entirely proper then, that they should be punished by them.

In the history of this plague we are farther told that the flax and the barley were smitten. This circumstance may, to the ignorant, appear trifling, after the description of the terrible slaughter made upon men and cattle by the hail. But it really was an affair of great moment. The ruin of the flax was particularly distressing. It was before mentioned that the Egyptians above all nations affected external purity. On this account, the whole people wore linen garments. The country was particularly famed for the production of fine flax, from the manufacture of which other nations were supplied with linen, (see Prov. vii. 16—Ezek. xxvii. 7.) Hence the destruction of their flax must have been attended with great inconvenience, and must have proved a heavy loss: so that a judgment of this kind was more severely felt by the Egyptians than it would have been by any other nation, and by the priests more than by any other class of men. The ruin of the barley was equally injurious. They had few

vines in Egypt: instead, therefore, of the juice of the grape they used "barley wine" which served them instead of water, in those seasons of the year when the Nile was turbid, and unfit to be drank. The destruction, then, of the hail, rain, and fire, must have been dreadfully ruinous.

I have now gone through seven of the Egyptian plagues. To enter upon the next, would extend this letter, already too long to a most *unconscionable* length. If health continues, you shall have the sequel in a few days. Adieu.

(To be concluded in our next.)



TO THE EDITORS OF THE VIRGINIA RELIGIOUS MAGAZINE.

THE mind that does not vibrate to the following delicate strokes of nature, must be divested of taste, or frozen to the feelings of humanity! The genuine effusions of the soul, rising in the language of compassion, should start the tear of pity, and awake the sympathetic glow of the heart!

The author of the Negro's Complaint, is the immortal author of the Task;—a writer whose correctness of taste, purity of sentiment, and sincerity of style, have nearly won the laurel from modern poets. D.



THE NEGRO'S COMPLAINT.

1 Forc'd from home and all its pleasures,
 Afric's coast I left forlorn;
 To increase a strangers treasures,
 O'er the raging billows borne:
 Men from England bought and sold me,
 Paid my price in paltry gold:
 But though theirs they have enroll'd me,
 Minds are never to be sold.

- 2 Still in thought, as free as ever,
 What are England's rights I ask?
 Me, from my delights to sever,
 Me, to torture, me to task!
 Fleecy locks and black complexion,
 Cannot forfeit nature's claim;
 Skins may differ, but affection
 Dwells in white and black the same.
- 3 Why did all creating nature,
 Make the plant for which we toil,
 Sighs must fan it, tears must water,
 Sweat of our's must dress the soil:
 Think, ye monsters, iron-hearted,
 Lolling at your jovial boards,
 Think, how many blacks have smarted,
 For the sweets your cane affords!
- 4 Is there, as ye sometimes tell us,
 Is there one who reigns on high?
 Has he bid you buy and sell us,
 Speaking from his throne the sky?
 Ask him, if your knotted scourges,
 Matches, blood extorting screws,
 Are the means, which duty urges,
 Agents of his will to use!
- 5 Hark he answers, wild tornadoes,
 Strawing yonder sea with wrecks;
 Wasting towns, plantations, meadows,
 Are the voice by which he speaks:
 He forseeing what vexations,
 Afric's sons should undergo,
 Fix'd their tyrant's habitations,
 Where his whirlwinds answer—no.
- 6 By our blood in Afric wasted,
 Ere our necks received the chain,
 By the miseries that we tasted
 Crossing in your barks, the main,

By our suff'rings, since you brought us
 To the man-degrading mart,
 All sustain'd, with patience taught us,
 Only by a broken heart.

7 Deem our nation brutes no longer,
 Till some reason ye shall find,
 Worthier of regard, and stronger
 Than the color of our kind ;
 Slaves of gold, whose sordid dealings,
 'Tarnish all your boasted powers ;
Prove that you have human feelings,
Ere you proudly question ours.

We have received several pieces for the Magazine, which cannot be published in this number, but shall in the next.

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