

THE
VIRGINIA
RELIGIOUS MAGAZINE.

No. 3] FOR MAY & JUNE 1807. [VOL. III.

BIOGRAPHY.

EXTRACTS FROM THE LIFE OF GEORGE WHITEFIELD.

THIS pious and extraordinary minister was born at Gloucester, December 16, 1714. His father who was bred to the wine-trade at Bristol, removed from thence to Gloucester, and kept an inn. He had six sons and one daughter. Of the sons George was the youngest, who was only two years old when his father died; and he was brought up with great tenderness by his mother.

When he was between twelve and fifteen, he had made some progress in classical learning; and, we are told, that even then his eloquence began to appear in some puerile compositions written for the amusement of his school-fellows. But his rising genius was deprived of the usual means of improvement, through the decrease of his mother's trade; and he was obliged to assist her in carrying on the business of the inn. His turn of mind, however, though depressed, could not be extinguished; and in this very unfavorable situation, we are told, that he composed several sermons, and that the impressions of religion were very strong upon him. When he was about seventeen, he received the sacrament, and employed as much of his time as he could in prayer and reading, in fasting and meditation, and in all those devout exercises, which are the food and the delight at once of every religious mind.

About eighteen, he entered at Pembroke College in Oxford, where he continued three years. At twenty-one, he was sent for by Dr. Benson, Bishop of Gloucester, who told him, "That though he had purposed to ordain none under three and-twenty, yet he should reckon it his duty to ordain him whenever he applied. Upon which, at the earnest persuasion of his friends, he prepared for taking

orders. His behaviour on this occasion was very exemplary. He first studied the thirty nine articles, that he might be satisfied of their being agreeable to scripture. Then, he examined himself by the qualifications of a minister mentioned in the New Testament, and by the questions that he knew were to be put to him at his ordination. On the Saturday, he was much in prayer for himself and those who were to be ordained with him. On the morning of his ordination, (which was at Gloucester, Sunday, June 20, 1736) he rose early, and again read, with prayer, St. Paul's epistles to Timothy, and, after his ordination, went to the Lord's table.

On the Sunday afterwards he preached a sermon in the church, where he was baptized to a very crowded auditory, on *the necessity and benefit of religious society*. His own remark upon this was; "Last Sunday in the afternoon, I preached my first sermon in the church where I was baptized, and also first received the sacrament of the Lord's supper. Curiosity drew a large congregation together. The sight, at first, a little awed me. But I was comforted with a heart felt sense of the divine presence; and soon found the advantage of having been accustomed to public speaking, when a boy at school; and of exhorting and teaching the prisoners, and poor people at their private houses, whilst at the university. By these means, I was kept from being daunted over much. As I proceeded, I perceived the fire kindled, till at last, though so young, and amidst a crowd of those who knew me in my childish days, I trust, I was enabled to speak with some degree of gospel authority. Some few mocked; but most for the present seemed struck: and I have since heard, that a complaint had been made to the bishop, that I drove fifteen mad the first sermon. The worthy prelate, as I am informed, wished that the madness might not be forgotten, before next Sunday."

The week following, he returned to Oxford, and took his bachelor's degree. And here he found full employment in taking care of the prisoners and the poor. But it was not long before he was invited to London. While he remained here letters came from the Messrs. Wesleys and Ingham, in Georgia, which made him long to go and help them. But not seeing his call clear, at the appointed time he returned to his little charge at Oxford. He now divided the day into three parts, allotting eight hours for sleep and meals, eight for study and retirement, and eight

for reading prayers, catechizing, and visiting the people. Yet his mind still ran on going abroad. And now, in January, 1737, being fully convinced he was called of God thereto, he set all things in order, and went down to take leave of his friends in Gloucester. It was in this journey that God began to bless his ministry in an uncommon manner. Wherever he preached, amazing multitudes of hearers flocked together, in Gloucester, in Stone-house, in Bath, and in Bristol; so that the heat of the churches was scarce supportable. And the impressions made on the minds of many were no less extraordinary. After his return to London, while he was detained by general Oglethorpe, from week to week, and from month to month, it pleased God to bless his word still more. And he was indefatigable in his labour: generally on Sunday he preached four times, to exceeding large auditories; besides reading prayers twice or thrice, and walking to and fro ten or twelve miles.

As his popularity increased, opposition increased proportionably. Nor was he without opposition even from some of his friends. But under these discouragements, he had great comfort in meeting every evening with a band of religious intimates, to spend an hour in prayer, for the advancement of the gospel, and for all their acquaintance, so far as they knew their circumstances. In this he had uncommon satisfaction. Once he spent a whole night with them in prayer and praise; and sometimes at midnight, after he had been quite wearied with the labours of the day, he found his strength renewed in this exercise, which made him compose his sermon *upon intercession*. The nearer the time of his embarkation approached, the more affectionate and eager the people grew. Thousands and thousands of prayers were put up for him. They would run and stop him in the alleys of the churches, and follow him with wishful looks. But above all, it was hardest for him to part with his weeping friends at St. Dunstan's, where he helped to administer the sacrament to them, after spending the night before in prayer: this parting was to him most insupportable.

On December the 28th he left London, and from Sunday, May 7th, 1738, till the latter end of August following, he made full proof of his ministry in Georgia, particularly at Savannah. It was now that he observed the deplorable condition of many children here; and now the first thought entered his mind of founding an orphan house; for which

he determined to raise contributions in England, if God should give him a safe return thither. In December following after a perilous passage by Ireland, he did return to London: and on Sunday January the 14th, 1739, he was ordained priest by his friend bishop Benson at Christ church, Oxford. The next day he came to London again; and on Sunday the 21st preached twice. But though the churches were large, and crowded exceedingly, yet many hundreds stood in the church-yards, and hundreds more returned home. This put him upon the first thought of preaching in the open air. But when he mentioned it to some of his friends, they judged it to be mere madness. So he did not carry it into execution, till after he had left London. It was on Wednesday, February 21, that, finding all the church doors to be shut against him in Bristol, (besides that no church was able to contain one half of the congregation) at three in the afternoon, he went to King's-wood, and preached abroad, to near two thousand people. The colliers, he had heard, were very rude, and very numerous; so uncultivated, that nobody cared to go among them; neither had they any place of worship; and often, when provoked, they were a terror to the whole city of Bristol. He therefore looked upon the civilizing of these people, and much more, the bringing of them to the profession and practice of christianity, as a matter of great importance. "I thought (says he) it might be doing the service of my Creator, who had a mountain for his pulpit, and the heavens for his sounding board; and who, when his gospel was refused by the Jews, sent his servants into the high ways and hedges." After much prayer, and many struggles with himself, he one day went to Hannam Mount, and, standing upon a hill, began to preach to about a hundred colliers, upon Matth. v. 1, 2, 3. This soon took air. At the second and third time the numbers greatly increased; till the congregation, at a moderate computation, amounted to near twenty thousand. But with what gladness and eagerness, many of these despised outcasts, who had never been in a church in their lives, received the word, is above description. "Having (as he writes) no righteousness of their own to rehouse, they were glad to hear of a Jesus who was a friend to publicans, and came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. The first discovery of their being affected, was to see the white gutters made by their tears, which plentifully fell down their black cheeks, as they came out of their coal pits. Hundreds and

hundreds of them were soon brought under deep convictions, which (as the event proved) happily ended in a sound and thorough conversion. The change was visible to all, tho' numbers chose to impute it to any thing, rather than the finger of God. As the scene was quite new, and I had just began to be an extempore preacher, it often occasioned many inward conflicts. Sometimes, when twenty thousand people were before me, I had not, in my own apprehension a word to say, either to God or them. But I was never totally deserted, and frequently (for to deny it would be lying against God) so assisted, that I knew by happy experience, what our Lord meant by saying *out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.* The open firmament above me the prospect of the adjacent fields with the sight of thousands and thousands, some in coaches, some on horseback, and some in the trees, and at times all affected and drenched in tears together, to which sometimes was added the solemnity of the approaching evening, was almost too much for and quite overcame me."

Besides the colliers, and thousands from neighbouring villages, persons of all ranks flocked daily out of Bristol.— And he was soon invited to preach, by some of the better sort, in a large bowling green in the city itself. Many indeed inered, to see a stripling, with a gown, mount a table, upon what they called unconsecrated ground. And for once or twice, it excited the contempt and laughter of the higher rank, who formerly were his admirers, when he preached in the churches. But God enabled him to stand the laugh, and to preach the gospel of Christ with earnestness and constancy; and was pleased to attend it with his blessing.

On Sunday, April 29, he preached the first time in Moorfields, and on Kennington Common. Opportunities of preaching in a more regular way being now denied him, and his preaching in the fields being attended with a remarkable blessing, he judged it his duty to go on in this practice, and ventured the following Sunday into Moorfields. Public notice having been given, and the thing being new and singular, upon coming out of the coach, he found an incredible number of people assembled. Many had told him, that he should never come again out of that place alive. He went in, however, between two of his friends, who by the pressure of the crowd, were soon parted entirely from him, and were obliged to leave him to the mercy of the rabble. But these, instead of hurting him,

formed a lane for him, and carried him along to the middle of the fields, (where a table had been placed, which was broken in pieces by the crowd) and afterwards back again to the wall that then parted the upper and lower Moor-fields; from whence he preached without molestation, to an exceeding great multitude in the lower fields. Finding such encouragement, he went that same evening to Kennington-Common, a large open place, near three miles distant from London, where he preached to a vast multitude, who were all attention, and behaved with as much regularity and quietness, as if they had been in a church.

At length, on August the 14th, 1739, he embarked for America, where he spent sixteen months, during which time he travelled through a great part of the country, every where preaching to incredible multitudes, who flocked to hear him, among whom were abundance of negroes. In all places the greater part of the hearers were affected to an amazing degree. Many were deeply convinced of their lost state; many truly converted to God.

Of his travels from Rhode-Island, and through a part of the state of Massachusetts, Connecticut, New-York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, through Philadelphia, Maryland and the Carolinas, Mr. Whitefield remarks, "It is now the 75th day, since I arrived at Rhode-Island. My body was then weak, but the Lord has much renewed its strength. I have been enabled to preach, I think, an hundred and seventy-five times in public, besides exhorting frequently in private. I have travelled upwards of eight hundred miles, and gotten upwards of seven hundred pounds sterling in goods, provisions, and money, for the Georgia orphans. Never did I perform my journeys with so little fatigue, or see such a continuance of the divine presence in the congregations to whom I have preached. Praise the Lord, O my soul."

On the 16th of January, 1741, Mr. Whitefield again sailed for England. He soon after visited Scotland, and continued preaching there about three months. At length, after having gone through evil report and good report, he left Edinburg in October 1741, and travelled to Abergavenny in Wales, where in consequence of a former resolution, he married Mrs. James, a widow lady of that place. From thence he went to Bristol where he preached twice a day with his usual success. After various excursions into the country, he went to London in the spring of the year, 1742, and now ventured to take a very extraordina-

ry step. It had been the custom for many years past, in the holiday seasons, to erect booths in Moorfields, for mountebanks, players, puppet-shows, &c. which were attended from morning till night, by innumerable multitudes of the lower sort of people. He formed a resolution to preach the gospel among them; and executed it.

On Whitmonday, at six o'clock in the morning, attended by a large congregation of praying people, he began.— Thousands who were waiting there gaping for their usual diversions, all flocked round him. His text was John iii, 14. They gazed, they listened, they wept, and many seemed to be stung with deep conviction for their past sins. All was hushed and solemn. “Being thus encouraged, (says he) I ventured out at noon, when the fields were quite full; and could scarce help smiling, to see thousands, when a merry-andrew was trumpeting to them, upon observing me mount a stand on the other side of the field, deserting him, till not so much as one was left behind, but all flocked to hear the gospel. But this, together with a complaint that they had taken near twenty or thirty pounds less that day than usual, so enraged the owners of the booths, that when I came to preach a third time in the evening, in the midst of the sermon, a merry-andrew got up upon a man's shoulders, and advancing near the pulpit, attempted to slash me with a long heavy whip several times. Soon afterwards they got a recruiting serjeant, with his drum, &c. to pass through the congregation. But I desired the people to make way for the king's officer, which was quietly done. Finding these efforts to fail, a large body, quite on the opposite side, assembled together, and having got a great pole for their standard, advanced with sound of drum, in a very threatening manner, till they came near the skirts of the congregation. Uncommon courage was given both to preacher and hearers. I prayed for support and deliverance, and was heard. For just as they approached us with looks full of resentment, I know not by what accident, they quarrelled among themselves, threw down their staff, and went their way, leaving, however, many of their company behind, who, before we had done, I trust were brought over to join the besieged party. I think I continued in praying, preaching, and singing, (for the noise was too great at times to preach) about three hours. We then retired to the tabernacle, where thousands flocked. We were determined to pray down the booths; but, blessed be God, more substantial work was done. At a moderate

computation, I received, (I believe) a thousand notes from persons under conviction; and soon after, upwards of three hundred were received into the society in one day. Some I married, that had lived together without marriage. One man had exchanged his wife for another, and given fourteen shillings in exchange. Numbers, that seemed as it were to have been bred up for *Tyburn*, were at that time plucked as firebrands out of the burning."

Soon after these transactions, he embarked a second time for Scotland, and arrived at Leith, on the 3d of June, 1742. When he was at Edinburgh, he received accounts that the Spaniards had landed in Georgia. Upon this account he wrote to Mr. Habersham; "I am glad my dear family is removed to Mr. Bryan's, and rejoice that our glorious God had raised him and his brother up, to be such friends in time of need. My thoughts have been variously exercised, but my heart kept stedfast and joyful in the Lord of all lords, whose mercy endureth for ever. I long to be with you, and methinks could willingly be found at the head of you kneeling and praying, though a Spaniard's sword should be put to my throat. But alas, I know not how I should behave, if put to the trial: only we have a promise, that as our day is, so our strength shall be. The thoughts of divine love carry me above every thing. My dear friend, the Spaniards cannot rob us of this; nor can men or devils. I humbly hope that I shall shortly hear of the spiritual and temporal welfare of you all."

During the period from this time till 1769. Mr. Whitefield often preached in every city in England and Scotland, and in most of the villages. He visited Ireland and several places on the continent of Europe, and some parts of the West-Indies. He also made five more visits to America, and more than once travelled through all the states. He every where preached to crowded assemblies with his usual success and opposition.

At length, on the beginning of September, 1769, Mr. Whitefield embarked for the seventh and last time for America. Here he spent his last efforts for the promulgation of the gospel, and at length departed this life, in a fit of the asthma, at Newbury-Port, in New-England, on the 30th of September, 1770, where his remains were deposited. He was not full fifty-six at the time of his death; but thirty-four years however of that time he had spent in the ministry.

AN ABRIDGEMENT OF LORD LITTLETON'S

OBSERVATIONS,

On the Conversion and Apostleship of

S. T. PAUL.

EXCLUSIVE of all the evidences of the christian religion drawn from prophecy, miracles, and the testimony of the apostles, it is thought that the conversion and apostleship of St. Paul alone, when duly considered, is itself a demonstration, sufficient to prove christianity to be a divine Revelation. So compendious a proof may be of use to convince those who will not attend to a longer series of arguments.

In the 26th chapter of the Acts of the apostles, written by a contemporary author (Luke) St. Paul is said to have given this account of his conversion and preaching to king Agrippa, and Festus the Roman Governor. (See the chapter from v. 1 to 29 inclusive). In another chapter of the same book, he gives in substance the same account to the Jews, adding these further particulars. (See chapter xx, from v. 10 to 16, inclusive). In the 9th chap. the author relates the same story with some circumstances not mentioned in these accounts; (see the place, verses 12 and 18). Agreeably to all these accounts St. Paul thus speaks of himself in his epistles to the churches he planted; the authenticity of which cannot be doubted, without overturning all rules by which the genuineness of any writings can be confirmed. To the Galatians he says, I certify unto you, Brethren, &c. (See chap. i, v. 11,—16, inclusive).

To the Phillippians he says, If any other man thinketh, &c. (See chap. iii, ver. 4,—8 inclusive).

And to Timothy he writes thus, I thank Jesus Christ our Lord who hath enabled me, &c. chap. i, v. 12, 13.

In other epistles he calls himself an apostle by the will of God, by the commandment of God our Savior, and Lord Jesus Christ—and an apostle not of men nor by men, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead. See Cor. i, 5; Col. i, 1; 1 Tim. i, v, 1; Gal. i, 1. And to the Cor. after enumerating many appearances of Jesus after the resurrection, he says, "And

last of all he was seen of me also, as one born out of due time, chap. xv, 8.”

Now the person, who attests these things of himself, and of whom they are related in the most authentic manner, must of necessity be, either an impostor, who said what he knew to be false, with an intention to deceive; or he was an enthusiast, who by the force of imagination imposed on himself; or he was deceived by the fraud of others; or the event which he declared to be the cause of his conversion, did really take place, and of course the christian religion is a divine revelation.

Now that he was not an impostor, will be proved by shewing, that he had no rational motives to undertake such an imposture: and that he could not have carried it on with success by the means he employed.

1. The inducement to such an imposture must have been one of these two, the hope of advancing by it his temporal interest, credit, or power, or the gratification of some of his passions under its authority, and by the means it afforded.

Now these were the circumstances, in which Paul declared his conversion to the religion of Jesus Christ; That Jesus, who styled himself the Messiah, notwithstanding his holy life, and the wonderful works he wrought in attestation of his divine mission, had been crucified by the Jews as an impostor; which crucifixion must not only (humanly speaking) have intimidated his followers, and prevented others from espousing his doctrines, but served to confirm the Jews in the opinion that he was not the promised Messiah, who according to their prejudices was not to suffer, but to reign forever upon earth. His disciples tho' at first much terrified, and disappointed by his death, had recovered their spirits, and publicly taught in his name, declared that he had risen from the dead, and confirming that miracle by many, which they themselves wrought, or pretended to work. But the rulers of the Jews so far from being converted, had begun a severe persecution against them, and were exerting themselves to bring the whole sect to destruction. In these severities Paul himself concurred; nor in the heat of his zeal did he content himself with persecuting the christians in Jerusalem, but “breathing out threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, he desired letters to Damascus, that if any should be found in this way he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.” He obtained a commission, and on his way to Damascus to

put it in execution, he became a disciple of Christ. What could be his motives for such conduct? was it desire of wealth? Not only the loss of what he had, but of any hopes of acquiring more was the certain consequence. Power and wealth were in the hands of those he left, those to whom he went were indigent and oppressed, without means of acquiring fortunes. Indeed, tho' the richer sort divided their property with the poor, they were hardly supplied with the necessaries of life. And even in the most wealthy churches he planted, often did he refuse even the necessaries of life, choosing rather to labor for them with his own hands. See 1 Cor. xv, 8; 2 Cor. xii, 14; 2 Thes. iii, 8; Acts xxii, 33, 34. From the state of the church it is there evident that St. Paul had no thought of enriching himself by becoming a christian; by continuing to be their enemy he had almost certain hopes of making his fortune by the favor of the Jewish rulers, to whom nothing could recommend him more than zeal in persecuting the christians. As to credit and reputation it lay all on the side of those he forsook. The sect he embraced was held in universal contempt. The leaders of it had no advantages of parts, learning or birth. Their doctrines were contrary to those commonly received. Their miracles were imputed to magic or imposture. Their Master had died on the cross. Could the disciple of Gamaliel think of gaining credit as a teacher in a college of fishermen? Could the doctrines he taught do him honor? No: he knew that preaching Christ crucified was to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness. And he found by experience that contempt was the portion of all who preached a doctrine unpalatable to the desires of, and so irreconcilable to the pride of human nature, (See Cor. iv. 23). Yet he went on zealous as he set out, and was not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ. Certainly the desire of glory was not his motive to embrace christianity. Was it then the love of power?—Power over whom? A flock of sheep driven to the slaughter, whose shepherd had lately been murdered? All he could hope from this power was to be marked out as the first victim. As a deserter too of the Jewish rules he would have been more severely persecuted. Was power over such men as the apostles, worth attempting with so much hazard? But it may be said that some natures are so fond of power they will court it at any risk, and be pleased with it over the meanest. What power then did St. Paul assume over the christians? Did he pretend to any superiority over the a.

postles? Did he pretend to any primacy even in the churches he himself planted? (See Eph. xxxviii, 1 Cor. xv, 9, and i, 12, 13—3, 5; 2 Cor. iii, 5). And it will appear that he wishes to be regarded by them only as an instrument of grace, and a preacher of the Gospel, not the head of a sect.

All the authority he exercised over them, was purely of a spiritual nature, without any of that civil dominion in which impostors alone find their account. Such was the authority acquired by Minos, Lycurgus, Taleucus, Zoroaster, and others in ancient times, and in modern by Mahomet, Mango-Copac, the Sophi of the Xeriffs, who desired spiritual authority only as a foundation for temporal power, or as the support of it. But St. Paul innovated nothing in government, meddled not with legislation, formed no commonwealths, raised no seditions, affected no temporal power. He taught and practised submission to rulers. He used none of the cunning arts of ambitious men, to recommend himself to favour. He reproved with freedom what ever was wrong, as became a teacher from God. In his absence he was as careful of the disciples, as when present.— See Phil. ii. 10 and xv. 16, 17. Are these the words of an impostor who desired only temporal power? But it may be said he affected absolute spiritual dominion over the churches. I answer he preached Christ and not himself. He calls those who assisted him fellow-labourers and fellow-servants. He took no advantage of his superior learning; he put himself on a level with the other apostles, he did not set up himself as the head of the sect he had formed; though it would have been easy for him to succeed in the attempt of raising himself above a few poor mechanics and fishermen, whose superior he had always been in the eyes of the world.— And so an impostor would have done. But Paul did none of these things. Most of the churches he might have modelled to suit his own ambition, for he preached the gospel where no other apostle had been, avoiding to build upon any other man's foundation. Now, had he been an impostor, would he have preached the same gospel as was delivered by the other apostles? Would he not have warped it to the increase and support of his own power? Neither Paul, nor any of the apostles did this. The gospel they preached agreed in every particular, and none attributed more to himself than he did to others. Is not this a proof that they were not impostors?

If then, the apostle Paul could gain nothing by taking this part, let us see what he must lose, and what he had to

feared. He gave up his fortune, which he was in a fair way of advancing: he gave up the reputation acquired by his studies, and by his blameless behaviour touching the righteousness which is in the law: he gave up his friends, his relations, and family: he gave up that religion to which he was so warmly attached, and of which he was so zealous. This last sacrifice was, to a man of his warm temper, and especially to a Jew, one of the hardest things in the world. For the Jews were, of all other people, the most tenacious of their religious opinions; and the pharisees among whom St. Paul was educated, were the proudest and strictest sect among the Jews. To depart so suddenly from their tenets to renounce their pride, and of a disciple to become their adversary, was a most difficult effort to one brought up in the esteem of them, whose prejudices were confirmed by the power of habit, the authority of example, and the allurements of honor and interest. These were his sacrifices. Now let us see what he had to fear: the implacable vengeance of those he deserted; the contempt of those whose good opinion he had sought; and all those complicated evils which he describes in 2 Cor. xi. Evils enough to have frightened any impostor from the most profitable cheat. But where the advantage proposed bears no sort of proportion to the danger incurred, he must be absolutely mad who will engage in a conspiracy, or being engaged will persevere. The desire of wealth, or fame, or power, could be no motive then with St. Paul, to become a convert to Christ; but on the contrary, these desires must have effectually deterred him, supposing christianity to be an imposture. It remains now to be enquired whether the qualification of any other desire under the authority of that religion could be an inducement.

There have been impostors it is true, who pretended to revelation from God, that they might give a loose to irregular passions, and free themselves from all restraints of morality. But Paul's doctrines are absolutely contrary to such designs. They breathe the purest morality, obedience to magistrates, order and government, and an utter abhorrence to all idle licentious behaviour; and his life was entirely consonant to his doctrines, his conversation and manners were blameless. Hear his appeal to the Thessalonians 2, 10. See also 2 Cor. i. 12, and vi. 2, and vii. 2. But some may possibly say, that though St. Paul had no selfish view in undertaking such an imposture, yet for the sake of the christian morality, he might support the christian faith,

which, though erroneous in its tenets and false in the facts upon which it was founded, might be beneficial in its influence upon mankind.

Now it is true, that there have been some good men who have pretended to divine revelations, and introduced, or supported religions they knew to be false, under a notion of public utility. This however was done for the benefit both of the deceiver and the deceived. In every instance which can be given of good men acting this part, they did it to serve good purposes, but were secure against doing harm. But at the time when Paul undertook to preach the gospel, to persuade a man to be a christian, was to persuade him to expose himself to all the calamities which human nature could suffer. This St. Paul knew, this he expected, and warned those he taught to look for it too. *Theff. iii. 4. 2 Cor. vi. 45. Eph. vi. 10—16 inclusive. Phil. i. 28, 29, 30. Coll. i. 9, 10, 11. Rom. viii. 35, 36.* and the only support he had himself or gave to others was “That if they suffered with Christ, they should also reign together,” and “That he reckoned these sufferings were not to be compared with that glory.” (See also *2 Tesh. i. 4, 5, 6, 7.*) And to the *Corinthians* he says, “If in this life only we have hope, we are of all men the most miserable.” The hatred, the contempt, the torments, and the deaths, endured by christians in that and after ages, shew how much reason he had to say this. A profession of the gospel under these circumstances, without an entire conviction of its truth, must have been the height of madness: and he, who by fraud or deceit made others profess it, must have been worse than mad, he must have been one of the most hardened villains that ever breathed. No man who had a spark of humanity, would have subjected his fellow creatures to so many miseries; and no man who had a ray of reason, would expose himself to share them, to advance a religion merely for the sake of its moral doctrines. Those who will not receive the testimony of the other apostles, may object to them, that having been concerned with Jesus during his life, consistency obliged them to continue in their professions after his death; but this can by no means be said of Paul. This reasoning indeed, tends to shew that Paul must naturally have continued an enemy to Jesus Christ. If shame withheld them from changing sides, it must have stopped him, who had a great deal more to lose, and must have been supposed more sensible of shame than they. The only difference was, that they, by deserting their cause might have

preserved themselves ; whereas he, by quitting the Jews, brought on himself certain destruction.

As therefore, no rational motive can be assigned for St. Paul's embracing the Christian faith, without having been convinced of its truth, but on the contrary every thing deterred him from it, we may justly conclude that he was no impostor.

It will next be attempted to prove, that if St. Paul had been so unaccountably stupid as to undertake such an imposture, he could not possibly have carried it on with success by the means he employed.

First it is observed, that if his conversion, and the part he acted in consequence thereof, was an imposture, it could not have been carried on by one man alone. He was not the author of the faith he professed, and therefore could not draw the doctrines out of his own imagination. He had no communication with Jesus before his death, nor with the apostles afterwards only as their persecutor. But as he took upon him the office of an apostle, he ought to have had a perfect knowledge of all, even the most private facts contained in the gospel, otherwise he would have exposed himself to the ridicule of those who had more knowledge than he : and his testimony, his doctrines, and his interpretations of the scriptures, would have been repugnant to theirs ; and either he must have ruined their cause, or they his. The least error in these points must have disgraced and ruined all pretensions to inspiration. The undertaking to preach the gospel, required not only this exact knowledge, but an apparent power of working miracles ; for to this all the apostles appealed for proof of their mission.— He was therefore to learn the secret arts by which they imposed upon the senses of men, if this power was a cheat. But would these men trust their most furious, and vindictive persecutor, with all the secrets of their imposture ? Would they have put it in his power to destroy their lives, and the honor of their sect, which they valued more than life ? This is more impossible than that he should have engaged in the cause without their consent and assistance. When he came to Damascus then, he could have had no communication with them, and he could have known nothing of their doctrines but what they taught publicly. When he arrived at the city, he gave the Jews an account of his conversion as is related in the Acts of the apostles. To account for this method of declaring himself a convert, we must likewise suppose that the officers who accompanied

him, were also his accomplices ; otherwise the story would be contradicted by their testimony. Yet how can we suppose that all these men, who had been trusted by the Jews in all probability, on account of their fidelity, would betray that cause they were employed in? It does not even appear that they had any connection with the man before, or any reward for their treachery afterward. Here therefore was a difficulty in the outset not to be overcome. But further Ananias who instructed him must have been his accomplice, tho' they appeared to be perfect strangers, and tho' he was a man of the fairest character, and so very unlikely to engage in an imposture. But here again the same objection occurs. How could this man venture to act such a part without the consent of the apostles ; and how could he obtain this consent? How absurd was it to make the conversion of St. Paul, the effect of a miracle which they that were with him could testify never did happen : It would have been much the safest and the most natural to have made the conversion of Paul the effect of some miracle performed by Ananias, or one of the apostles, the fraud of which could never have been detected. But they ascribed it to an event which lay open to detection. For St. Paul appealed to Agrippa that this thing was not done in a corner ; and the Jews could not bring a shadow of proof of any fraud in the affair. But what could be Ananias's motive for engaging in this dangerous affair. Did he do it without hope of advantage? Did Paul shake him off at the hazard of his resentment? The only way to get over this difficulty is to suppose that he died shortly after. Let us suppose this ; and see then in what manner this imposture was carried on by Paul himself. His first care would have been to get himself owned, and received as an apostle by the apostles. Until this was done he had no means of supporting his credit with the disciples. Intruders into impostures run a double risk : they are in danger of not only by those upon whom they attempt to practice the cheat, but also by those into whose society they force themselves, who were always jealous of such an intrusion and much more, from one who had been an enemy. The least delay was then of dangerous consequence, and might have been fatal to a man in Paul's circumstances. But instead of attending to this necessity, he went into Arabia, and then returned to Damascus ; nor did he go to Jerusalem until three years after. Now this may be accounted for if it be true that " He neither received the gospel of any man, nei-

ther was he taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." Under such a master he might go boldly on, without associates : but an impostor so left to himself could not have succeeded.

Further, we find that he was not afraid to withstand Peter to his face, and even to reprove him before all the disciples, "because he was to be blamed." If he was an impostor how could he venture to offend a man, whom he was so interested to please. Such freedom belongs only to truth.

But let us consider what difficulties he had to encounter among the gentiles to whom he was particularly sent. Now, in this enterprize, St. Paul was to contend, 1st with the policy and power of the magistrates. 2d, with the interest, credit, and craft of the priests. 3d, with the prejudices and passions of the people. 4th, with the wisdom and pride of the philosophers.

1. In all heathen countries the established religion was interwoven with the civil government, and supported by the magistrate as a part of that government. They however, suffered men to converse freely concerning religion provided they would conform to the established rites ; they even allowed an intercommunity of worship, and without much difficulty admitted new Gods. But when any attempt was made to overturn the established religion, the civil power was armed with all its terrors against it. And this St. Paul very well knew when he undertook the conversion of the gentiles.

2. This danger was rendered more certain from the opposition he was to expect from the interest, credit, and craft of the priests. How gainful a trade they made of the superstitions which Paul proposed to destroy ; how much credit they had with the people and state ; and how much craft they employed in carrying on their impostures, all history shows. It was to be expected then, that these men would exert all their power to suppress a doctrine which struck at the root of all their credit and gain. Whatever, therefore, they could do by their cunning, by the aid of the civil magistrate, or by the zeal of the people, St. Paul to contend with, unsupported by any human assistance.

3. He had to do this in direct opposition to all the prejudices and passions of the people. This difficulty would not have been so great among the Jews, as the gentiles, because the people were favorably disposed to the apostles, on account of the many miracles which had been wrought

among them. But among the gentiles no such disposition could be expected. They had violent prejudices both in favor of their own superstitions, and against any doctrines taught by a Jew. For the Jews were hated and despised by all nations. But besides this national prejudice, the doctrines taught by the apostle were such as shocked all their most rooted opinions. They had no principles of which he could avail himself. To the Jews he could prove from the old testament that Jesus was the Christ; but the gentiles admitted no scriptures, expected no Christ, and were to be taught the old testament as well as the new. How was this to be done by one in Paul's circumstances, opposed by the most powerful of his own nation; and himself either quite single, or attended with others as badly, or more unfavorably situated than he was?

The apostle might appeal to the light of nature, as indeed he did, for the evidence of the existence of a God, but this light they had almost extinguished by their superstitions (see Rom. i, xxiii, 25,) and to these superstitions they were strongly attached by their prejudices and passions: by pompous rites, which dazzled their senses, and often led them to impure, and immoral pleasures—and they were taught that their deities would be pleased not by virtue and holiness, but by offerings and outward rites. Instead of this the gospel proposed acceptance with God only on terms of sincere repentance, and perfect submission to the divine law, purity of life, and a renunciation of those lusts in which they had heretofore walked. How unpalatable this to the heathen world, immersed in the grossest sensuality? Who could hope that the people would exchange the ease and indulgence which their religion allowed, for the strict morality of the gospel? Had Paul been an impostor he would have relaxed something of the rigor of the christian religion, but he preached it purely and strongly enjoined it in all his epistles. But suppose they would forsake their sensuality, their idolatry, and all their abominable practices, how were they to be persuaded to receive the doctrine of salvation by the cross of Christ? This doctrine was contrary to all the received notions of the world; it struck directly at the pride of human nature. Mighty conquerors and powerful kings were the men whom the heathens had received into the number of their Gods, could they then reconcile their notions to the doctrine of a crucified Redeemer? Paul then had not only the power of the magistrates, the craft, and interest of the

priests, but also the passions and prejudices of the people to encounter in his undertaking.

4. It is next to be proved that he was to expect no less opposition from the wisdom and pride of the philosophers ; and it will be found, that instead of befriending the gospel, they were its very worst enemies ; they had prejudices more deeply rooted, and more obstinate than the vulgar. Their wisdom consisted of vain speculations, logical subtleties, and sceptical doubts about the most clear and certain truths. Nothing can be more contrary to the first principles of the christian religion than the tenets held by the ancient philosophers : their opinions were fundamentally contrary to those of the gospel : their pride was in direct opposition to the humility of the christian religion ; and their interest armed them against it. The different sects had at that time obtained great credit in the world ; the greatest kings and generals were their disciples and professed the opinions they taught. But the religion of the gospel overturned their systems, taught a more perfect morality, mortified their pride, confounded their learning, discovered their ignorance and ruined their credit. Against such an enemy they would exert all the power of their rhetoric, the subtilty of their logic, their influence over the people, and their interest with the great. If St. Paul had only his own power and understanding to trust to, he never could have hoped to be a match for such opposition. Could an obscure Jew have overcome the authority of Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus, Zeno, and all the great names which held the highest rank of human wisdom ? He might as well have attempted to erect a monarchy upon the ruin of the several states in the world, as to erect christianity upon the destruction of the heathen philosophy. If then Paul had to encounter all the opposition of the magistrates, priests, people and philosophers, it necessarily follows, that to succeed in that work he must have received some extraordinary aid, some stronger power than reason and argument. Accordingly he tells the Corinthians, that " his speech was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit and power." (See also 1 Thess. i, 5.) It was to the efficacy of that power to which he ascribed all his success. If that went with him then he could conquer all difficulties, *but then he was no impostor*. We may safely conclude then, that no human means were employed by St. Paul could be adequate to the whole difficulties he had to encounter, and we can reasonably ascribe his success to no other cause than the power of God.

Having now shown that Paul could have no rational motives for becoming an Apostle of Christ, without being convinced of the truth of the Gospel; and that had he engaged in such an imposture, he could have had no possible means of success; having also made it appear that his success was the effect of divine power, I might rest all my proof of the Christian religion being a divine revelation upon this head alone. But to consider this subject in all possible lights, I shall next enquire whether he was an enthusiast, who imposed upon himself by an overheated imagination.

Now these are the ingredients of which enthusiasm is generally composed, great heat of temper, melancholy, ignorance, credulity, and vanity, or self-conceit.

That the first of these qualities was in Paul may be concluded from the fervor of zeal with which he acted both as a Jew and a christian. But this quality will not be sufficient to prove him an enthusiast in the opinion of any reasonable man. The same temper has been common to others who were not enthusiasts; nor had this disposition such a mastery over Paul but what he could command it, so much so indeed as to become all things to all men in matters of an indifferent nature; a conduct very different from that of a bigot, or fanatic. His zeal was warm but tempered with prudence and civility, as appears by his conduct to Agrippa, Festus, and Felix.

As to melancholy, which of all dispositions render men most prone to enthusiasm, there is no evidence that St. Paul was more inclined to it than other men. We read of no gloomy penances, no extravagant mortifications to which he subjected himself, such as enthusiasts commonly do. His holiness consisted in the simplicity of a good life, and the performance of his duties as an apostle; he cheerfully bore his suffering, but he brought none upon himself; on the contrary, he pleaded the privilege of a Roman citizen, to avoid being whipped. (See also his conduct at Athens in Acts xxvii.) Compare this conduct with that of other enthusiasts, and it will be found quite the reverse of it.

As to ignorance, Paul is well known to have been master of all the Jewish and Greek learning. He is therefore less liable to the charge of enthusiasm than any of the apostles, though none of them were such more than he.

Credulity has been mentioned as another cause of enthusiasm, which that it was not the character of St. Paul the whole history of his life plainly shows. On the contrary he was slow of belief to an extreme degree, having paid no

regard to all the miracles performed by Jesus Christ and his apostles, to which he could not be a stranger. The evidence of these he resisted, and was consenting to the death of Stephen. So that his mind so far from being disposed to credulity in receiving the christian religion, that he was most obstinately prejudiced against it, and nothing but the evidence of his own senses could have overcome his unbelief.

Vanity, or self-conceit, is another circumstance that commonly prevails in the character of an enthusiast; it leads men to think themselves worthy of the particular favor of heaven, and that inspiration to which they pretend, is nothing more than this vanity which puffs up their imaginations. This appears in the writings and lives of the mysticks both ancient and modern, in many of the saints among the papists, and in some of the methodists now. But that St. Paul was free from this, is evident from his life and writings. Thro' all his epistles there is nothing that favors of vanity, (see Eph. iii, 8; 1 Cor. xv, 9; 1 Tim. i, 15, 16. It is true indeed, that he tells the Corinthians that he was not behind the very chiefest of the apostles. A false teacher by faction and calumny had brought his apostleship into question among these people: and on such an occasion it would have been a desertion of the duty committed to him by God, had he not asserted his apostolical dignity. In justice to himself he was constrained to speak as he did, and it may be observed that he did not give a pompous detail of his amazing miracles; but with a modest and simple account of his labors, he says "that the signs of an apostle had been wrought among them, in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds." Is not such boasting humility? Yet even for this he makes many apologies, expressing the greatest uneasiness in being thus obliged to speak for himself. And when for the same purpose he mentions the vision he had of heaven, how modestly does he do it! not in his own name, put in the third person, "I knew a man in Christ, &c. caught up into the third heaven." (2 Cor. xii, 2.) And immediately after he adds, "but now I forbear, &c." (2 Cor. xii, 6.) How contrary this to the spirit of vanity! Yet St. Paul is not satisfied with this forbearance, he adds a confession of some infirmity, "that he might not be above measure exalted with the abundance of his revelations." Nor does he take any merit to himself from the success of his apostolical labors, of which he principally boasts in this epistle. (See 1 Cor. iii, 5, 6, 7;

and chap. xv, 10. It is needless to give more instances of the modesty of St. Paul.

A convincing proof that he was not an enthusiast is that he preferred the real graces of christianity to all the gifts of tongues and prophesy, to the power of working miracles (1 Cor. xiii. 2, 3, 4). An enthusiast never did prefer benevolence to faith, to miracles, to the religious opinions he had embraced, to the supernatural gifts he supposed he had acquired, and even to martyrdom. It is manifest then, that as St. Paul had none of the qualities of an enthusiast, that he was none.

But upon the supposition that he had all these qualities of mind, it was utterly impossible that by any power of enthusiasm he could have imposed upon himself, either in regard to the miracle which caused his conversion, or to the consequences of it, or to other circumstances, to which in his epistles he bears testimony.

The power of imagination in the minds of enthusiasts is indeed very strong, but then it always goes with the current of the passions. Now, when Saul started to Damascus his mind was strongly prepossessed against the Christian religion; and to give his opinions more force, his passions were inflamed to the highest degree. Had he, in this state of mind, imagined he saw a vision from heaven, denouncing the anger of God against the Christians, and commanding him to persecute them without mercy, it might be accounted for by the power of enthusiasm. But, that at the very instant of his being engaged in the hottest persecution against them, he should at once imagine himself called by a heavenly vision to be an apostle of Christ, whom, but the moment before, he imagined to be an impostor, is wholly incredible, and so far from being an effect of enthusiasm, that a contrary effect must have been produced by that cause. This is so clear a proposition, that the whole argument might be rested entirely upon it; but still farther, to shew that it could not be a vision of St. Paul's own creation, let it be observed that he was not alone, and that his companions were no better disposed to the christian faith than he. Could all these men, at the same instant, be so infatuated as to imagine that they saw a light above the brightness of the sun, and that they heard a voice speaking from heaven? Could they fall from their horses, and be speechless through fear, when nothing extraordinary had happened either to him or them. This supposition is contrary to nature, and unbelief must find some other solution or give up the point.

Suppose then that Saul and his company saw a meteor which caused the great light, at which they were affrighted; fear and ignorance might make them think this a vision from God. Even the explosion of a meteor might be taken for the sound of a voice. But how will this account for the distinct words heard by Paul: How will it account for what followed when he came to Damascus? How came Ananias to go to him and tell him that "He was chosen by God to know his will?" What connection was there between the meteor and the words of Ananias? Will it be said that Ananias took advantage of his fright to make him a christian? But could Ananias inspire him with a vision, in which he saw him before he came? How could such an imaginary vision be verified exactly in fact. But suppose he dreamed of Ananias by chance, and that Ananias came by chance too, will this get over the difficulty? No. Paul had been blind for three days; how then could Ananias heal this blindness by the laying on of his hands? This surpassed the power of nature: if this was a miracle, it shows the other to have been a miracle too, wrought by the same Jesus Christ. For Ananias declared that the Lord who had appeared to Paul in the way, had sent him to restore his sight and give the Holy Ghost. (Acts ix. 17, 18.) After this St. Paul went from Jerusalem, and round about to Illyricum, and preached the gospel of Christ, with mighty signs and wonders, wrought by the power of the spirit of God; signs and wonders above any power of nature to work, of imposture to counterfeit, or of enthusiasm to imagine. Now does not such a series of miracles, all the consequence of a revelation, and dependent upon it, prove beyond a doubt that there was such a revelation. And if he could have so far imposed upon himself as to think that he worked them when he did not, how could so distempered an enthusiast make that progress in the world, that we know he did. If the difficulties would have been insurmountable to the ablest impostor, what could a madman have done?

We might enter into a particular examination of the miracles performed by St. Paul, and shew that they were of such a nature that neither enthusiasm in him, nor in the persons upon whom they were wrought, nor in the spectators, could have any part. When he told Elymas the sorcerer, at Paphos, before the Roman deputy, that the hand of God was upon him, and he should be blind for a season; and immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness, and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand.

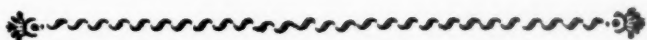
Had enthusiasm in the doer or sufferer any hand in this act. When at Troas, a young man named Eutychus fell down from a high window, while Paul was preaching, and was taken up dead. Could enthusiasm in Paul or in the congregation present, make them believe that by the apostles falling on him and embracing him, he was restored to life.— When in the island of Melita, where St. Paul was shipwrecked, there came a viper, and fastened on his hand, which he shook off, and felt no harm, was that the effect of enthusiasm? An enthusiast might have hoped for safety from the bite of a viper, but would hope have saved him. These are instances to show that the miracles ascribed to Paul, could not be effected by enthusiasm.

But moreover, the power of working miracles was communicated to the churches planted by Paul, as is evident from his epistles, in many places of which he speaks to the churches of their miraculous graces. Now can all that he said upon that head, be ascribed to enthusiasm? If the Corinthians knew that they had no such miraculous powers among them, they must have regarded the author of the epistle as a madman, instead of revering him as an apostle. If they were impostors, and Paul also such, it was ridiculous in him to advise them in an epistle written only to them and for their use, not to value themselves too highly upon such gifts; but to prefer charity to them all. Associates in fraud do not use such language as this. But suppose it was enthusiasm; if enthusiasm could make a man believe that by a word, or a touch, he could give sight to the blind, motion to the lame, or life to the dead; would that conceit make the blind see, the lame walk, or the dead revive? And if it did not, how could he persist in such an opinion, and escape being confined as a madman?

The apostles pretended to have the power of speaking in unknown tongues. And St. Paul says that he possessed the gift more than them all. If this had been a delusion of fancy, and they only spoke unmeaning sounds, it would soon have appeared, when they undertook to convert those who understood no language they naturally spoke; it must soon have appeared that this imaginary gift was a real phrenzy. Of all the miracles recorded in scripture, none are more clear of being liable to any imputation of enthusiasm than this. No man could think he had it, who had it not. Accordingly no such power has been pretended to by any enthusiast.

It only remains now to be enquired whether the Apostle

Paul was deceived by fraud, and whether all that he said of himself can be imputed to the power of that deceit. But little need be said to shew the absurdity of this supposition. It was morally impossible for the disciples to think of turning the persecutor of Christ into his apostle; and to do this by a fraud in the very instant of his greatest fury against their Lord. But could they have been so extravagant, it was physically impossible for them to have executed it in the manner we find his conversion was effected. Could they produce a light at mid day brighter than the sun? Could they make Saul hear words out of that light, which his company did not hear? Could they make him blind for three days, and then make scales fall off his eyes, and restore him to sight by a single word? Beyond dispute, no fraud could produce these things; but much less could the fraud of others produce those miracles subsequent to his conversion, in which he was not passive but active, which he did himself, and appeals to in his epistles as proofs of his divine mission. I shall then take it for granted that he was not deceived by the fraud of others, and that what he had said of himself cannot be imputed to the power of that deceit any more than to wilful imposture or enthusiasm: and then it follows that what he asserted to have been the cause of his conversion, and what happened in consequence of it really did happen, and therefore *The Christian religion is a divine Revelation.*



An address from the Presbytery of Hanover, to the Congregations under its care.

DEAR BRETHREN,

THE Presbytery of Hanover, being appointed under God, the guardians of the church, and watchmen on the walls of Zion, are bound to raise their voice and sound an alarm, whenever danger approaches. The present is a time of alarm and of danger. We beseech you, therefore, to give your most serious attention to the facts and remarks which follow.

Is it not without the most sensible uneasiness, that we observe the gradual decline of religion among us. Our congregations are annually decreasing in number. Some are taken from us by death, others remove to distant places,

and few additions are made. The rising generation, instead of filling the places of their pious parents, are walking in the paths of folly and vanity. The love of professors seem to wax cold; and many, of whom we might expect better things, are eagerly enquiring, what shall we eat, and what shall we drink, and wherewithal shall we be cloathed? Multitudes are endeavouring to serve God and Mammon; whilst among others, antinomian principles seem not only to be admitted in speculation, but reduced to practice. The church is crumbling in ruins. Instead of the prevalence of piety and faith, and charity; temperance, and sobriety, and virtue; we see a wide wasting torrent of profanity, impiety, and dissipation; of pride, luxury, and infidelity overspreading our land, and threatening to extinguish every remaining spark of genuine piety among us. The churches of God are greatly deserted; the institutions of the Gospel are treated with contempt; an unaccountable apathy and listlessness have seized even those who profess to love the religion of Jesus. The spirit of God, justly provoked by our crimes, seems to have withdrawn from us. The word is a dead letter; the ordinances of the gospel do not seem to be attended with power, either to the edification of christians, or the conversion of the unregenerate. The Presbytery of Hanover cannot sit unconcerned spectators of this melancholy scene. The most imperious obligations urge them to address you, dear Brethren, in the language of exhortation and reproof. Our iniquities have separated between our God and us; our sins have insulted the blessed Spirit and caused him to withdraw from us. For these things, the deepest humiliation and self abasement become us. Let us humble ourself under the mighty hand of God, that he may raise us up.

But permit us in the faithful discharge of the duties incumbent upon us, to descend to a few particulars, which may more clearly set before our eyes our great backslidings from the Lord.

In the first place then, the Presbytery are constrained by remark, that the spirit of the world seems deeply to have infected the professors of religion. The genius of the people, or the circumstances in which they have been placed, have turned the minds of multitudes to the ardent pursuit of wealth, so that the whole object of their life seems to be, to buy and sell, and get gain. Instead of seeking the pearl of great price, earthly merchandize claims their attention: instead of laying up for themselves treasures in Heaven,

they are seeking for the good things of this world. This temper has seized many, who ought, in consistence with their profession, to have their affections set upon things above, and not upon things on the earth. Hence have they grown cold in the service of God, and negligent of his institutions. In them has been verified that declaration of our Lord; "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon." That wealth, which with such rapidity has flowed into our country, has had the tendency, to make men proud and self-sufficient. Instead of filling our hearts with gratitude to our bountiful Benefactor, the language of many has been, "Who is the Lord, that he should reign over us?" "Will not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?" said Jehovah, to a people in similar circumstances. Accordingly we have found that the judgments of God are abroad in our land. The present year has been a year of unexampled difficulty in our land; and such have been the circumstances of the times as to make it manifest, that the Lord has a controversy with the people. He has begun to afflict us; and from former dispensations of providence, we cannot expect that the rod will be laid aside, until we are either humbled in repentance or ruined. Look at the history of the Jewish nation. Gentle chastisements were tried, and tried in vain. That perverse and stiff-necked nation persevered in iniquity and rebellion against God, until they had to deplore the consequences of their folly and obstinacy, amidst the smoking ruins of their holy city, and hallowed temple. Brethren, let us take warning by their fatal example, repent of our sins and turn unto the Lord, ere he destroy us by the breath of his mouth, and by the brightness of his coming.

Again, the influx of wealth into our country has been the cause of great extravagance in youth, in dress, and in all the pleasures so eagerly pursued in that season of life. Thus have the minds of the rising generation been occupied with trifles; their dispositions have received a giddy, thoughtless, and extravagant turn; so as not only to exclude all thoughts of religion, but also to lay the foundation of very serious evils in their future progress through life. These are matters, to which we would call the serious attention of the heads of families, and of all those who have a regard either for the prosperity of Zion, or the good of our country.

This brings us to the notice of what we are persuaded, is the fruitful source of those evils which so much abound,

and which threaten the desolation of the church, namely, *the great neglect of the religious education of children.*

The necessity of training up children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, is most clearly evinced, by the express declarations, of scripture, and by the light of reason. Nothing can be more false than the maxim, that, as religion is a matter only between God and our souls, children are therefore to be left entirely without instruction, until the time when their judgments being matured by age, they are able to make a choice for themselves. For the great truths of religion being as certain, and as plain as truths of any other kind, there can be no imaginable reason why they should be withheld from the minds of youth. And when it is considered, that the impressions made in early life, are more likely to be durable than any others, they are entirely inexcusable, who neglect this favorable season for imbuing the mind with the love of piety and virtue, and with reverence for the Deity. The duty here urged, imposes itself with additional force on parents, and all who have the care of youth, when it is recollected, that unless the youthful mind be seasoned with piety and religious knowledge, unless habits of virtue are formed, vicious passions will grow up with their growth, and strengthen with their strength. There is no neutral ground here. There will be from infancy to manhood a gradual progression either in vice or virtue. Either good or bad habits will be formed. Parents will either have the unspeakable pleasure of seeing their children walking in that way, which leads to honor and respectability in life, and to real felicity; or the exquisite pain of seeing them indulge those licentious practices, which are ever attended with pain, and often lead to infamy in this world, and infallibly tend to everlasting infamy and contempt, in that state to which we are all hastening. Let it also be recollected, that when the season of youth is spent in dissipation and folly, for the most part, manhood and old age are correspondent to it. So true is this observation, that in every age the wisest and best men have uniformly remarked, that very few embrace religion in advanced life. A vast majority of those, who have been the supporters of the church, and who have been made partakers of the blessings of the gospel, have been those who remembered their Creator in the days of their youth, and who were trained up in the way in which they should go.

Having laid before you these remarks, which to us appear of primary importance, we do most solemnly exhort

you, dear Brethren, as you value the interests of Zion, as you love the religion of the blessed Jesus, as Jerusalem is precious in your sight, to engage and to persevere in fervent prayer to Almighty God, that a revival of genuine religion may take place, that God of his infinite mercy would pour out copious showers of divine grace upon the thirsty hill of Zion, that the desert and solitary place may bud and blossom as the rose, and that our barren places may be filled with pools of water. We exhort you, who possess the religion of Jesus, to make your lights to shine before men, that others seeing your good works, may glorify your father who is in Heaven. Remember the solemn obligations you have brought upon yourselves; remember that the vows of God are upon you; that the prosperity of Zion depends in a great measure upon your exertions; remember the shortness of life, the rapid approach of death, the judgment bar, and all the solemn realities of Eternity. Let it be seen by your conduct that you have not followed cunningly devised fables; and that you are really in earnest when you profess to be seeking a better country, that is heavenly. We, as the ministers of God, who must give an account of our stewardship, solemnly call upon you and every individual among you, to exert yourselves in the cause of God and religion. Let every man in his station employ all that personal or official influence which he may have, all those powers which God has given him, in the promotion of piety and the discountenancing of iniquity. And especially we would urge it upon parents to engage most earnestly in the important work of training up their children in the ways of piety, and in the knowledge of the truth. We forewarn you however that this is a work of great labor and difficulty. It is not sufficient merely to oblige children to recite to you the catechism of our church, and to read through the Bible, you must be instant in season and out of season. You must begin with infancy, and go on a steady undeviating step, until it pleases God to accomplish your wishes, and bring your beloved off-spring into the fold of Christ, you must teach them by precept and by example; you must endeavor by strong cries and tears to prevail on them to engage in God's service, and seek everlasting life. In short, all that labour, that diligence, that zeal, that perseverance amidst discouragements and difficulties, which you exercise in providing for their worldly honor and prosperity, you ought to employ in promoting their everlasting interests. And is this too much to be required of you? Fathers! we call upon you,

and we adjure you by the ties of paternal affection, to exert all that authority and influence which God has given you, to restrain your children from the destructive courses of sin, and to guide them in the way to heaven. As you are placed at the head of your households, and as all regard your example, much may be done by you for the good of their souls. Much is given, to you and of you much will be required. Recollect that awful account which soon you will have to give to the great Judge of the universe.— How shocking to think that the blood of children may be found in the skirts of their fathers! Mothers! ye who love the Lord Jesus, and who in him have found a refuge for your souls—do ye not love the souls of your children? Do you not most earnestly desire that they, whom you have so often pressed to your bosoms with the ineffable tenderness of maternal love. Oh! do you not wish that they may escape the wrath of God? that they may at last be found safe in the arms of Jesus? Parents! when your infant offspring are sporting around you, when your hearts expand with unutterable fondness, and the tear of affection starts in your eye, do you not then sometimes cast an anxious eye forward into futurity and think, alas! these dear pledges of mutual love, our children, our beloved children, may be ruined by sin!—their souls may be lost!—they may sink forever under the stroke of divine justice; and curse the day that gave them birth, and the authors of their existence! We beseech you then, by all your hopes and fears, to begin from the very time you commit them to God in Baptism, and unweariedly besiege the throne of grace, until you draw down the blessing of Heaven upon them; and from the cradle let them be imbued with religion. Let the first name which they lisp be the name of Jesus; let them, when first they speak, begin to utter his praise. As reason advances, let them be instructed more and more in the great doctrines of our blessed religion. Let them learn the ruin and degradation of our nature by sin; the awful condemnation to which they are exposed; the wonderful grace of God in providing a Saviour, and the way of salvation through him. Alternately point them to Hell, the doom of the wicked, and to Heaven, the reward of the righteous. Show them that brighter world above the sky; and do you lead the way to it. Thus may you hope sometimes to see them growing wise to salvation, thus may they be a crown of glory to your grey hairs, and strew with flowers the downward road of life, which leads you to the tomb.

And while we are thus addressing parents, we would also drop a word to the rising generation. We beseech you, beloved youth, to lend a patient ear to parental admonition and reproof; regard the voice of your parents when they press and invite you to fly from the fatal courses of sin, and to take refuge in the arms of a Saviour. Listen to your ministers, when they warn you of the wrath which is to come; and in compassion to your souls, exhort you to flee from it. Hear the voice of God, when in his holy word, he commands you, "Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth." Hear the voice of Jesus, when by his dying love, he calls you to turn unto him and live, to look unto him and be saved. And be exhorted to shut your ears against the siren song of pleasure. The world entices you, the devil tempts you, your own lively passions impel you eagerly forward; but the world entices but to destroy you; the devil tempts but to destroy; your passions impel you only to your ruin. Listen not then to these seductions, fortify your hearts against these temptations, and learn to walk in those ways that are pleasantness and peace, that you may find rest to your souls. The voice of experience declares, that in religion alone the true pleasure of life consists. They, who wander from her, wander from life, from peace, from hope, from heaven, from God. All who hate her love death. Let the prime of your days be spent in the service of God; give to your Saviour the best of your affections.

While speaking to you, Christian Brethren, on the subject of the religious education of your children, we would not forget to point you to another very important, but much neglected duty; namely, the right education and training of your servants. Remember that they have immortal souls; that they are under your authority and direction; that all the sins which they commit through your neglect, all the ruin which is brought upon their souls on account of their ignorance of those truths in which you ought to have instructed them, will be charged upon you. We beseech you then to pay that attention to their best interests, which they deserve. Fearful indeed will be the account which you will have to render unto God, if these things are slighted; and fearful, it is probable, will be the judgments, which heaven will bring upon you, even in this world, on account of the great neglect in training up servants in the knowledge of the way of salvation.

To one point more will we call your attention before we

close. It is known to you all, that in the bounds of this presbytery, there are very few ministers professing the knowledge, the zeal, and the piety united, which ought to belong to the ministerial character. In a population of between three and four hundred thousand souls, how few are there, taking in all denominations, who possess those talents, that fund of knowledge, that aptness for teaching, which will enable them to expound the scriptures, to defend the religion of Christ Jesus, to put to silence the scoffs of the profane and impious, and urge the truths of God home to the hearts and consciences of men. There has been an effort made to increase their number, by establishing a school for the education of poor and pious youth for the ministry. Numbers have most generously come forward, and contributed largely to this charitable design. Heaven has so favoured us, and such has been the liberality of numbers, that we expect in a short time to be able to place at school at least one young man who will be thus trained up for the ministry.— But this is a small matter. Hardly shall we be able in this way, to supply the places of those, whom God in the course of his providence will remove from labouring in his vineyard here, to the enjoyment of their labours in a better state than this. We do then in this solemn and public manner, call upon all the pious, the benevolent, and the liberal, to favour this plan of charity. Recollect, we beseech you, dear friends, the condition of thousands of your fellow creatures—your countrymen—perishing for lack of knowledge; going, ignorant of the solemn truths of religion, in the road to eternal ruin. Christians! has Jesus redeemed your souls from sin and from hell, and inspired you with those hopes, which bear you up amidst all the troubles of life? Has he stretched out the arm of mercy to you? and will you not in return for his love, make some sacrifices of worldly interest? Here is a wide field of charity opened before you all. Here is a suitable object for the exercise of benevolence. And let it be recollected, that every mite bestowed here will be productive of good to distant generations. Centuries after your heads are laid in the dust, your gifts will be doing good. Generations yet unborn, will call you blessed. We know that this is an unfavourable time—that all feel themselves pressed with difficulties, from the late unfavourable seasons. But this should be no objection to the making of contributions for the purposes of charity. If you give unto the poor, you lend unto the Lord, and surely he will repay you with abundant interest. “ Prove

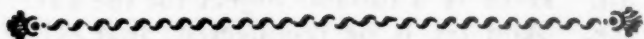
me now herewith, saith the Lord of Hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it." Whereas, if the heart is contracted, if the selfish affections prevail, if we are intent only upon our own gratifications, we may expect that the blessing of Heaven will be withheld; and our land, though fertile as the garden of Eden, will be converted into a desolate wilderness. It is reasonable to expect, that what God foresees will be spent in luxurious enjoyments, or hoarded up with miserly care, will be denied; but that the liberal soul shall be made fat. We know that calls are often made on your charity; but God is unceasingly bestowing good upon you. We know that solicitations of this kind are frequently repeated; but we know that the love of heaven is endless. "Honour the Lord then with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase, so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine."

Finally, Brethren, be heartily engaged in the cause of God. Endeavour to be useful in the church of Christ.— Be not slothful in business, but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. Let your faith in our divine Master be strong; and give all diligence to add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance godliness, and to godliness patience, and to patience brotherly-kindness, and to brotherly-kindness charity.— May these things be in you and abound, so that you shall be neither barren nor unfruitful. To God we commit you, and may grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, be with your spirit.

Signed, by order of the Presbytery,

CONRAD SPEECE, *Moderator.*

JOHN H. RICE, *Clerk.*



▲ SABBATH EVENING, AT MR. JERVAS'S.

AT the time alluded to in the last Number, I had attended a sermon, and rode a considerable distance, that I might have the pleasure of Mr. Jervas' company on Sabbath evening. When I arrived at the house, I found the whole family collected in a spacious Hall. The company was composed of Mr. Jervas and his lady, Miss Lucia, three or four grand children, and about 30 servants, who

were all arranged round the Hall. They had just taken their seats when I arrived. I feared that I had come in at an unseasonable time; but Mr. Jervas received me with his usual benignity, and requested that I would take a seat among them. I accepted the invitation, and sat an attentive spectator of the scene. It was new to me, and highly interested my feelings. The old gentleman was seated in his great arm chair, with the venerable and dignified mien of an ancient Patriarch; beside him sat the worthy companion of his joys and his sorrows; next was their amiable daughter, whose eyes sparkled with intelligence and whose countenance was sobered by piety; next were arranged their grand children, who watched every gesture and regarded every word of their venerable ancestor, then followed the servants, healthy, decently clad, and contented. I was following the train of ideas which this scene suggested when Mr. Jervas surprised me, by asking his daughter to give us an account of the sermon, which she had heard on that day. This request made me wish I had not intruded, and I confess that I felt considerable pain for the young Lady, who, I feared, would be not a little embarrassed. But what was my surprise when I heard her, without confusion, and yet with most unaffected modesty, mention the text, state clearly the heads of discourse, give a distinct abridgement of the the arguments under each division, and run through several practical inferences which the preacher had drawn from his subject! This facility of remembering, and relating what she had heard, was acquired, as I afterwards learned by habit. It being the custom with Mr. Jervas always to require this of his children: and though, said he, at first scarcely any thing more than the text was recollected, yet, in process of time, every important idea of a discourse was treasured up in the memory, and detailed with ease.—In the next place the grand children were called upon to say their catechism; which was promptly done, and a brief, simple, and appropriate exhortation was delivered to them. After this a number of black children stood up, and said a few questions in the catechism, which had been taught them by their parents. Mr. Jervas gave them also some words good advice. Miss Lucia was then called upon to read one of the Village Sermons (1) to the family, which being

(1) The Village Sermons, lately printed by Wm. W. Woodward of Philadelphia, are strongly recommended as

ended, the old gentleman concluded the whole business with family prayer. Opportunity being then afforded for conversation, I enquired whether every Sabbath evening were spent in that way, or if this were any extraordinary affair. Every evening replied he, since I was master of a family has been spent in a way nearly similar to this. And I find it both more pleasant, and more profitable thus to spend the evening of the Lords day, than in sleep, in idle conversation, or foolish amusement. But said I, did not you find it, at first, a very difficult task, to induce your servants to attend, and when you compelled their attendance, did they not frequently sleep during the service? Nothing valuable, replied Mr. Jervas, can be obtained without labour. I acknowledge that it was one of the most difficult tasks that I have ever undertaken. For several years, I found great reluctance in the blacks to give the attendance that I required. "But hard labour conquers every thing." By persevering in my plan, by sometimes giving correction, and sometimes admonition, I prevailed upon them to submit to my regulations. Those that were young were trained up in this way from their infancy. I took care to have them all taught to read the scriptures, and furnished them with Bibles. Every servant that has been born in my family for thirty years, has also been taught the Assembly's shorter Catechism; and as well as I was able, I instructed them in the doctrines of our holy religion. My efforts were not without success. One and then another embraced religion. The work then became more easy. I had greater encouragement to proceed. And now I have not a servant who does not long, throughout the week, for sabbath evening to come. But give me leave to ask, said I, if you were not afraid, that giving them such instructions would inspire them with high notions of liberty, and make them both troublesome and dangerous? Not at all replied he—not at all. The knowledge of the precepts of christianity, and the practise of its duties will never lead men to rebellion or insurrection. So far from it, that the readiest way to incline them to act as they ought, is to train them up according to the precepts of the gospel. He who knows that servants are enjoined in the gospel to be obedient to their own

well suited to be read on such occasions. They are short, plain, highly impressive, and fervently pious. No head of a family ought to be without them.

masters, not with eye service, as men pleasers, but in singleness of heart, as unto Christ, surely will not be a worse servant, than he whose only motive to action, is the dread of an overseer's lash. For my own part, I know from many years experience, that the best and most enlightened christians, are the best servants. And this is confirmed not only by my own observations, but also by the declarations of others. A gentleman, who holds a very large number of slaves, informed me the other day, that he had by sufficient experience proved the truth of these remarks. And I have heard of an excellent old lady, who frequently observed, that the preachers, who instructed her servants in the doctrines and duties of religion, were of much more advantage to her, than all the overseers she ever employed. But I can relate a particular instance of this kind, which will furnish very strong proof of the correctness of my opinions. I have a servant, who was, for some years, the most passionate, obstinate, and perverse being I ever had to manage. When offended with any arrangements of the family, she appeared more like a bedlamite than a reasonable being. But a few years ago, by the blessing of God on my labours and instructions, she became pious, and I have never seen a more valuable servant than she now is. Patient, meek, submissive, and obedient, she zealously obeys all my orders, and serves me with the utmost faithfulness, and honesty. How blind, then, and preposterous is that conduct, which neglects the religious education of servants? And how much pleasure do we lose by this neglect? There are some people, who look upon this unfortunate race of men with a most unreasonable, and malignant jealousy. If a negro appears contented and happy, it seems to irritate them beyond measure. If he seems anxious to enjoy the benefit of Christian ordinances, they think him proud and impudent. In short, it appears to be the opinion of many, that these creatures were only made to work, to be cursed, and to be beaten. This conduct is both inhuman and impolitic. It is inhuman, because negroes have immortal souls, and Christ died as much to redeem them, as to redeem us. It is impolitic, because every servant is thus made an enemy; or to say the least, no servant has any motive but that of fear to induce him to discharge his duty. But sir, said I, do you not find that indulgence spoils them? Are they not indolent and worthless? I have frequently heard the maxim, "Treat a negro well, and you ruin him." If, rejoined Mr. Jervas, you call the treatment which I

have mentioned, indulgence, I do not find that it does. I have been a house-keeper forty years, have raised thirteen children, and have in no year, been obliged to buy provisions for my family: and for the most part have been able to sell. This is a sufficient proof that my servants have not been spoiled by indulgence. I know that some humane men, the mildness of whose disposition cannot bear that their servants should be cut to pieces with the scourge of an unrelenting overseer, and who have never thought of stimulating them to industry by any other motive than that of fear, have been ruined by the indolence and dishonesty of their slaves. But in my mode of training servants, I have universally insisted upon that maxim, that "*if any will not work, neither shall he eat.*" I have taught them the reasonableness, and necessity of industry; and have always endeavoured to show myself so much interested in their protection, their health, their comfortable lodging, eating, &c. and their instruction in religious doctrine, that I have had a claim upon their gratitude, and have interested them in my welfare. I have no notion of indulging any in idleness. It is no kindness to do so. Neither do I, on the other hand, require unreasonable labour from them, as if they were brutes. Multitudes have objected to me, that my plan would not do, that it required an intolerable labour, to which no man could submit. I know by long experience, that it requires labour. But surely to ameliorate the condition, and to add to the enjoyments of the unfortunate, is an object worthy of labour: and it is undoubtedly worth a man's while, to labour incessantly, while his life lasts, to be the means of saving one soul. I do not find that our Saviour refused to undertake, and prosecute the great work of preaching the glad tidings of the kingdom, and of accomplishing our salvation, because it was laborious. And those who profess to follow him, ought to tread in his foot steps. I will take the liberty, however, to observe, said I, that there are in our country many wealthy persons, who hold such numbers of slaves, that it is absolutely impossible for them to train them up, in the way that you have done. How can a man, who has two or three *quarters*, instruct his servants in the doctrines of religion?

Sir, said Mr. Jervas, the duties of masters and servants are reciprocal. It is the servant's duty to honour and obey his master, and serve him with all fidelity. It is the master's duty to protect, feed, and clothe his servant, and give

him such instruction as is necessary for salvation. If the servant fails on his part, the law allows compulsory measures; if the master fails in his duty, what can be done? Shall it be said, he has so many that he cannot discharge the duties which he owes them? I fear that in the bar of conscience, the validity of this excuse can hardly be admitted. The only question here is, do the duties which I have mentioned, result from the relation of master and servant? If they do, then, no accidental circumstance can destroy the obligation. If you have too many for your care, who forced them upon you? At the day of *judgment*, it will hardly be enquired, how many servants we possessed; but how we discharged the duties which we owed them. But if the relation does not imply the obligations which I mentioned, then the matter is decided at once. We are by the gospel of Christ, at full liberty to neglect them as we please: and he is equally meritorious, who permits his slaves to live as heathen, with him who trains them up in the fear of God, and instructs them in the knowledge of a Saviour.— Which conclusion, I think, few Christians are willing to admit. For my own part, I cannot bear to hear a man, who, under the influence of a worldly spirit, is continually adding to his possessions of this kind, excuse himself for the neglect of an acknowledged duty, by saying that he has too many, to be able to act as he ought towards them, when, at the same time, it is perfectly known that there is not even an effort made to do that which is conceded to be right.

But to give a more direct answer to your question; if matters are so situated with any person, that in present circumstances, he cannot give his personal attention to this important affair shall it be entirely neglected? I think not.— In the case supposed, it is equally impossible to give personal attention to worldly affairs. Are they therefore neglected? No certainly. But the most industrious, active and intelligent man that can be obtained, is engaged to superintend them. Why then might not the master, when bargaining with an overseer, pay some regard to the best, the immortal interests of his servants, as well as to his own temporal concerns? From these remarks, I think that the following conclusions may be drawn. 1, That it is the duty of every slave holder, to use his utmost exertions to employ as overseers, men of piety. 2, To furnish them with some plain elementary books in religion, which, on sabbath days, they should be obliged to read to the negroes.— 3, To encourage them, by suitable rewards, to instruct the

negroes in reading, so far, that they shall be able to read the scriptures; and to catechise them. And 4, That masters, when they visit their plantations, for the purpose of examining into the state of affairs, and inspecting the conduct of their overseers, should also pay that attention to this business, which its importance, and the solemnity of the obligation requires. I know that this scheme is attended with formidable difficulties, and, indeed, to a timid mind, it may appear entirely impracticable. But I am persuaded, that if it were prosecuted with that activity and ardor, that unwearied perseverance, and unremitting diligence, with which men prosecute their plans of wealth and aggrandisement, that much good might be done. When men are really intent upon the attainment of any object, they discover a subtilty, an ingenuity, and a fruitfulness, in resources perfectly astonishing. Thus would it be in this business, if every man had a just view of the worth of souls, of the solemn obligations imposed upon him, of the awful account *one day* to be rendered. Thus would it be, if every man instead of *living for this world, lived for ETERNITY*. But though much might be done both for the present and eternal advantage of this unhappy race, and I am persuaded too, for the *present* and *eternal* advantage of their masters, yet hardly an effort is made. How we can answer before God for such an omission of duty, I know not. And how we can expect that the judgments of Heaven will be averted from us, I will not pretend to say. For my own part, I have most gloomy apprehensions. But please to observe, that I am saying nothing now, as to the lawfulness of the holding of slaves by the people of this country in present circumstances. My own conduct on this subject, sufficiently manifests my opinion. But the only question before us is, how we should treat them while they are in our possession? I have given you my opinions freely. And my reasons for holding them.

Do you not sir, said I, carry your opinions on this subject to an extent which may be called rigid. Would it not be sufficient to permit our servants to attend divine worship on the sabbath?

Ah sir, said he, nothing can be called sufficient, *unless it is the very best thing that we are able to do*. And besides this, who does not know the disadvantages that these poor mortals labour under, when they have the liberty to attend preaching? It often happens, that they are obliged to give way to the *whites*, as it is proper that they should. But

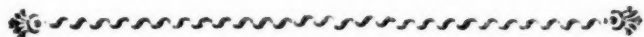
what benefit can they derive from preaching, which they cannot hear? But if matters are so arranged, that they can hear, for the most part they are ignorant of the fundamental doctrines of christianity, which every clergyman is obliged to suppose, that his people are acquainted with, that they understand not the discourse. It requires a mind of some cultivation, to be able to follow a train of reasoning, and take up those ideas which are rapidly delivered. Very ignorant people *whether young or old, must be catechised*, or they will remain forever ignorant of Christian doctrines. Wherefore, I have always admired the institution of an *order of catechumens* (2) in the early ages of christianity. It is I think much to be lamented that there is not such an order now in our church. But I am about to digress from the subject. Negroes, I can assure you from experience, must be catechised.

(2.) In the early ages of Christianity it was thought necessary to divide Christians into two orders, Believers and Catechumens. Believers were those who were so instructed in the doctrines of Christianity, and so grounded and established in the truth, as to be admitted to the full enjoyment of all the privileges of the church. Catechumens were such as were not fully instructed in the doctrines, and of course were not admitted to the ordinances of the church. These were committed to the care of men eminent for their gravity, wisdom, and piety, to be trained up in the knowledge of Christian truth; and when it appeared that they were sufficiently instructed, they were admitted into the number of believers. Now if all men were christians, and if all christians were sufficiently careful to give their children religious instruction, there would be no necessity for such an order; but this is far, very far from being the case. There are, however, I believe, many who are in some degree impressed with religious truth, but too ignorant of religion to be admitted to the privileges of the church, or even to be much profited by attendance on public worship; yet they would gladly receive those instructions which are necessary to make them wise unto salvation. I submit, therefore, this question to those who are concerned, for the welfare of the church. "Whether, in the present state of affairs, it would not be expedient to institute an order of Catechumens, and appoint Catechists, whose duty it should be to take care of the Catechumens, and give them suitable instructions?"

I have only one question more to ask, said I, on this subject. I have known the majority of black people, who made a profession of religion, to have very strange and ridiculous notions on the subject. Nothing can persuade them that they have not seen strange sights, such as the devil, chasing them with balls of fire. Hell opening to receive them; Jesus dying on the cross for them; and I know not what. Has it not been difficult for you to eradicate such foolish notions from their minds? Something like this has occurred in my family, said Mr. Jervas, and the only remedy, which I have found for it, is instruction in the doctrines of religion. *Ignorance is the parent of these wretched superstitions, which are so often substituted for religion. And they never will be destroyed until men are better taught.* They have at present a most disastrous influence in our land; and I greatly fear that this influence will be extended, rather than diminished. There are thousands of black people, and many of the whites, who profess religion, and are no more influenced by it's precepts, in their daily walk and conversation, than *Turks* or *Heathens* are. See them at church, and they are full of zeal; you would suppose them about to take Heaven with a holy violence; but see them elsewhere, and they are utterly unchristian. And there is nothing wonderful in this; for the only foundation of their hope is, that they have, as they firmly believe, seen some strange sight, which filled them with dreadful agony; and afterwards, in some miraculous way, have been delivered from their fears. This at once secures Heaven to them, and they may live as they please. It is a little wonderful, that any who undertake to preach the gospel, and have the management of church affairs, should encourage or even tolerate such dangerous absurdities. They have a very unhappy effect in many respects; and not the least evil resulting from them is, that in any attempt to christianize the blacks in Virginia, the owners of them, seeing so little piety, honesty, integrity, and humanity, in those who profess religion, would treat the plan with great coldness. Whereas if all those who are called christians, were properly instructed and taught the necessity of that faith, which worketh by love, even those masters, who neglect their own souls, would see such a difference between these, and those who were not thus taught, that for the sake of their own interest, they would cheerfully contribute to the promotion of such a design. And if the time were once come, when all the slaves in Virginia were christianized,

and made acquainted with those truths which are necessary to a holy life, all nations in the earth might call us blessed. Plots and insurrections, and all the horrid ideas, which now haunt the minds of so many misguided people, would no more be apprehended, servants would then do their duty, and even if buffeted for well doing, would take it patiently. I am persuaded, sir, that I have several negroes now, who would not be tempted to leave us, by the price of freedom. "My master, they say, and my mistress are my best friends; I have a plenty to eat and to wear, I have a good warm house, I am nursed when I am sick, and I am taught how to love, and serve God, and what more do I want?" In the time of our revolutionary war, when the British tempted our slaves to leave us, for the sake of an experiment, I collected my family together, and informed them that if they chose it, they might now be free. The British invite you to come to them, go if you please. I shall do nothing to hinder you. This speech seemed greatly to affect them all. Numbers burst into tears, and enquired what they had done to offend me. An old African whose fidelity I had often experienced, came up to me, and seizing my hand kissed it, then laying his hand on his breast he exclaimed, "Massa, me will spilla my blood for you; me will live and die for you; me no leava you." I was scarcely ever more affected, than by this strong proof of generous attachment. I dismissed them with assurances of my regard and of my determination always to consult their best interests. But it is time to retire to rest. Good night, sir. May you enjoy comfortable repose.

On taking my leave the next morning, I was invited by Mr. Jervas, to dine with him on the ensuing Christmas, as he then expected a company of select friends to be with him. In a following number I design to communicate what passed on that occasion.



A CONVERSATION, AT MR. JERVAS'S.

On my arrival at Mr. Jervas's, at the time appointed, I found there, besides several of his children, three clergymen. It will be proper to introduce these to the acquaintance of the readers of the Religious Magazine. The eldest of them had been a preacher ten or fifteen years, is endowed with faculties of the highest kind, and has cultivated

them with great assiduity. No man of his age has greater extent or variety of information, His powers are peculiarly fitted for the investigation of truth. With a sound judgment, a vigorous understanding, a quick perception, and great compass of thought, he has the capacity of holding his mind in suspense, until a subject is viewed in all its bearings and relations; and until the rays of evidence, however widely they be dissipated, are all brought to a focus on the point under investigation. Possessing such intellectual powers as these, he is animated with a love of truth, and thirst after knowledge, which prompts to unwearied diligence in research, and unremitting application to study. His knowledge then must be considerable. His taste is refined, his imagination rich in imagery, his elocution copious, and his trains of reasoning are close and logical; his eye sparkles with intelligence, and his voice is melodious as the notes of the nightingale. But in addition to all these excellencies, he is remarkably modest; it is impossible for you to be in his company without seeing his superiority, and yet such is his modesty that it gives you no pain to acknowledge it. I shall, for the sake of distinction, call him Paulinus.

The second is a younger man and a younger minister.— He also possesses real genius. The most remarkable quality of his mind is vigor; in argumentation he reminds one of the Ajax of Homer, armed with his mace of iron, and at every vibration overthrowing whole troops of Trojans.— His conception is very clear, and of course he is perspicuous, precise, and fluent in his elocution. From the comparison just used, however, it is not to be supposed that there is any thing of coarseness or vulgarity in his mind.— Far from it. His imagination is delicate, and his taste refined. I shall call him Philander. The piety of both these gentlemen is warm and unaffected. They have hearts formed for friendship. Possessing the highest talents and the best means of information that Virginia could afford, they would have been capable of filling any office; and might have risen to the first eminence in the state. But such was their devotion to the cause of Christ, that they left all and followed him.

The third gentleman is a young man of good education, of lively talents, and promises considerable usefulness in the church of Christ. His name is Merton.

The usual salutations and compliments of the season, introduced a conversation on the subject of observing holidays, such as Christmas, Easter, and other seasons of this

kind. The young clergyman expressed a wish that they might be abolished, for, said he, the observance of them gives occasion to a great deal of dissipation, foolish mirth, noisy frolic, and unreasonable waste of time.

Your remark, said Paulinus, furnishes a very just objection against the manner in which these times are spent; and this I admit is utterly indefensible. But while this admission is made, I would by no means advocate the abolition of these days. The zeal which many have displayed, against what are called superstitious observances, has been carried to an unreasonable length. While human nature continues in its present state, days appointed by proper authority, or agreed upon by general consent for religious employments and exercises, are of considerable advantage; and it would undoubtedly produce very happy effects, it, at that season of the year, when Angels from Heaven proclaimed, "Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, and good will to men," all were suitably employed in meditation on the inestimable blessings which Jesus Christ came to bestow upon the human race. The same observations may be applied to Good Friday, Easter Sunday, and other days of this kind. Nor is it a just argument to object, that there is danger of these becoming mere formal observances; for this, if admitted, will apply to the Sabbath, to the preaching of the word, and to every institution of the Christian Church. For my own part, then, I would not have them abolished; but I think it desirable that publick teachers should turn the attention of their people to such seasons as these, and instruct them in the proper use to be made of them. The company acquiesced in these sentiments.

Philander then remarked that in several points, with regard to the mode of conducting divine worship, and the houses appointed for that purpose, he differed much from many in our country. It is quite a common saying of a house intended for worship, that it is good enough for a *meeting house*, when in truth there is not a church in this part of the state as good as a *Dutchman's barn*. They are generally poor, miserable leaky hulls, which let in wind and water on every occasion; and it is almost impossible at any season to accommodate a congregation tolerably, I will not say comfortably, for that is out of the question, in buildings set apart for publick worship. In Roman Catholic countries, they would be thought proper places to do penance in.

Merton. Places of worship should at least be so constructed, as to be comfortable to the audience at any season. This

is necessary to a profitable attendance on divine ordinances.

Philander. But I carry my ideas farther on this subject, than merely to take in what is comfortable. Churches ought to be elegant buildings, and constructed in such a taste of simple grandeur, as to inspire worshippers with awe and solemnity. It is impossible to feel that composure of mind when sitting in an open house, with the wind whistling around our ears, which we feel when in a stately edifice, such as I have mentioned. And though instrumental musick in churches is exploded, among us, yet were I to consult my own taste, I would have a good organ at every place of worship. Its deep and solemn tones compose the mind, draw off the thoughts from worldly cares, and admirably prepare us for the solemn duties of prayer and praise. What sir, (addressing himself to Paulinus) is your opinion on this subject?

Paulinus. In this point I agree with you; but would go still farther. At the period of the reformation an intemperate, undistinguishing zeal against the corruptions of popery, destroyed many things which are in their own nature indifferent, and many which might be useful. Of this number I consider paintings in churches. The objects of sense have such an influence upon us, and so universally affect our feelings, and influence the determinations of the mind, that it would be a happy thing accomplished if we could enlist the senses in the cause of religion. The history of the old and new Testament, furnish so many excellent subjects for the Artist, that there could be no difficulty, on this score, in furnishing churches with suitable pieces. If in describing the passion of our Lord, for instance, we could point our audience to a master-piece of painting on this subject, it is highly probable that our words would have a more powerful effect, than at present they have. And if every part of our houses were so furnished with sacred subjects, that in whatever direction we should turn our eyes, objects connected with religious truth were presented to them, it is also highly probable that our congregations would be more serious, when in the house of God, than they generally are. Among Roman Catholicks, there is almost universally to be found more zeal, at least more appearance of devotion, and piety, and more attachment to religion than among Protestants. I think that this can be accounted for, only from the circumstance that among those people, the senses, as I said, are employed in the service of religion.

Philander. I beg leave to ask whether, upon this plan, there would not be danger of the people's being satisfied with the mere form, without the life and power of religion? We know that among the Protestants, the superstitions of the Catholics have long been proverbial, and it has frequently been charged upon them, that their religion consisted more in pagentry and show, than in any thing else.

Paulinus. There is not that danger to be apprehended from these circumstances, which many imagine. I know indeed that in all situations, we are to guard against formality and superstition. But the most effectual barrier against these, are learning, piety, and refinement among the clergy; and instruction in the doctrines of religion freely communicated to the people. Among the ignorant there will be superstitions, and where there is superstition there will be observances, which have no tendency to promote true piety. In our own country there are thousands who know nothing of popery, and whose worship is so simple, that *art* has not been employed, to build a house for them to worship in, and yet among these, it is no breach of charity to say there are formal professors, and superstitious observances. In the plan that I would propose of managing the affairs of religion, I would have the people well instructed from their infancy in its doctrines. Now the facts recorded in scripture history are so connected with the doctrines of religion, that the latter do absolutely depend on the former. The person then who is well instructed in religious doctrine, will have the facts upon which these doctrines depend, strongly associated together in his mind. And when any object of sense, for instance a good piece of painting, or even a ceremonial observance, brings to his mind the historical fact, by the principle of association, he will be led to dwell on the doctrine connected with it. It appears to me, that so far from promoting superstition and formality, this might have a happy tendency to advance the cause of piety. At least I think it may be affirmed, that the person imbued with religious knowledge, and trained up in the fear of God, surrounded in a church, with objects intimately connected with the important truths which belong to his soul's salvation, would hardly be so lightly employed as many persons now are, while sitting in the church.

Phil. These observations are new to me, but I have no doubt of the justness of them.

Mr. Jervas. I beg pardon for interrupting you gentlemen, but as we can have no hope of seeing the service of

God thus conducted in our day, suppose that we lay aside these speculations, and come to something nearer home—something of practical utility. The conversation between you has turned my mind very strongly to the state of religion in Virginia. As you have lately visited various parts of the country, I propose that you give a view of this subject, and devise something for the amelioration of matters among us—some remedy for the evils of which we complain. I have observed that most friends to religion, when they feel the evils which press upon the church, complain heavily, but make few exertions for the amendment of what is wrong. I am an old man, more used to practice than to speculation, *I love to engage in schemes of practical utility.* Let us then in the first place hear your remarks upon those evils which threaten the church, and then let the remedies be suggested. And let Merton begin first. This proposal being accepted, Merton began as follows. “That which struck me as most remarkable in the religious character of this people, while on my missionary tour among them, was their ignorance of christian doctrines. I often found it difficult to know how to preach to them, as I discovered that they were totally ignorant of the meaning of the terms most commonly in use in Christian discourses, such as Regeneration, Sanctification, Adoption and the like.— It was necessary to begin at the very first principles of the gospel, and explain them as I would to a child in a catechetical lecture. And what is a little extraordinary, this ignorance is not confined to careless persons, but is to be found even among the professors of religion. I know not whether this can be much wondered at, when such numbers of those, who undertake to be teachers, are so ignorant. I once found very great difficulty in making a *preacher* of the gospel sensible of the difference between regeneration and sanctification. But it would look like bitterness and ill nature, to detail anecdotes on the subject of the ignorance of the clergy. The world would call me bigot if I were to do so; and yet there are bishops of churches in Virginia, in the same state of ignorance with the famous bishop in the tenth century, (I think) who being called upon to affix his signature to some piece of writing, was obliged to place his mark instead of his name. While this state of affairs continues, it cannot be expected that religious instruction, will be widely disseminated. The next thing that struck me in a very unfavourable point of view, is the number of sects in Virginia. This may properly be denominated *the land*

of divisions: and multitudes among the people, have all the bigotry, the rancour, and illiberality of sectarians, without the zeal or the piety, which are sometimes found among them. A vehement spirit of profelytism prevails. In the section of the country through which I travell-d, there are many preachers who never deliver a discourse without introducing the peculiar tenets of their party, and urging them with as much zeal as if the salvation of souls depended upon them. I have frequently observed the bad consequences of these unfortunate divisions, both upon professors, and careless persons. To the enemies of our holy religion, they furnish a pretext for objecting against it. And in addition to the narrowness and illeberality, which christians contract from the endless controversies to which these divisions give rise, the insilling so much upon the peculiar doctrines of a sect, by the public, and allowed teachers of Christianity, is very apt to turn the attention of the sectarian, chiefly to his distinguishing tenets. The regard to these is frequently substituted for the great and weighty matters of the law, and the gospel, faith and judgment and mercy. It is much more easy to an unregenerate man, to regard one or two religious rites, than to live a life of faith on the Son of God, and daily to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Another very discouraging fact on this subject is, that although this country was at its first discovery, settled by christians, and the gospel has, from a very early period, been preached among us, yet the number of professors of religion bears a very small proportion indeed to the population of the country. There are multitudes, who are bitter enemies to the gospel, and more, who are mere indifferentists; while very few indeed are warmly interested in its support. And of those who do appear interested, the majority seem to pay no regard to the promotion of religion in general, but only to the extension of their own society. These are the remarks which I have had occasion to make on this subject. I shall be glad to hear the opinion of those who have had longer time for observation, than I myself have had."

Mr. Jervas. According to the order agreed upon it is Philander's time next to speak on this point.

Philander. Our friend Merton has already detailed a pretty large catalogue of evils which afflict the Church. But certain circumstances have brought to my knowledge, and pressed upon my consideration some others which he

has not noticed. In the first place then, in addition to what he has said, I remark that in this country, it is most unfortunate, that those men, who devote themselves to the labour of preaching, are so scantily supported. I do not know a single clergyman who receives a competent support for a family. I know that I am here furnishing a theme for railing accusations. The avarice of the clergy, their monstrous wealth, and tyrannical exercise of power, have been subjects of declamation for many a sterile wit, who could find nothing else to laugh at. But the whole world knows that we are guiltless of the crime of *being rich*. And it is truly ridiculous, for men to talk of the avarice of those, who after they have spent their little patrimony, and the prime of their lives in the acquisition of knowledge, and exhausted their constitutions, and ruined their health by laborious study, have to suffer under the pressure of poverty, and scuffle out their lives with the help of one hundred pounds per annum. And indeed sometimes with the half of that sum. These are melancholy facts. And accordingly we find that very few indeed have the disinterestedness, the fortitude and self-denial to engage in the ministry. Nor is it wonderful; for this profession uniformly presents us with the barren and comfortless waste of poverty; while on the other hand, to every man of genius and learning, the other professions of our country open the door to honours and emoluments, to high offices and considerable wealth; and I myself know men who toil thro' the laborious life of a clergyman, with the pitiful salary of one hundred pounds, who possess genius and activity, and industry, which would in the profession of the law, produce an annual amount ten times as great. I therefore greatly fear that the clerical office will in process of time be deserted by men of learning and genius, and filled with *unlearned clerks*, who will only burlesque their profession, and bring religion into contempt.

Another evil of which we have reason to complain, is that in most of those few congregations, which are willing to give any thing to the support of their pastors, the money can only be raised by the miserable and deceptive shift of an annual subscription. Thus when a minister settles at any place, he must toil through the first year as he can; at the end of it, the collection is begun to be made; a few dollars are received at one time, a few at another, a beef, a shoat, a piece of Virginia cloth is offered in payment: thus the second year is more than half gone before

the collection for the first is made ; but in the mean time some person is disgusted with some unwelcome truth, delivered by the preacher, and withdraws his subscription ; another follows his example : thus is the sum reduced from the *pompous hundred a year* down to fifty or sixty pounds, and often to less. These are real facts without exaggeration. Nay, I have known a man worthy to succeed an apostle, having a large and expensive family which he was with difficulty able to support, labour for years in succession, without receiving a cent more than twenty-four pounds per annum, and sometimes not the half of it. And yet he was abused by many as a money preacher. These things are certainly unfavourable, and I cannot suppose that the fears heretofore expressed are ill grounded. There is in Virginia a population of eight hundred thousand souls, and except a few Episcopalians, and about thirty Presbyterians, how many men of learning are in the ministry ?

The circumstances which I have mentioned, produce in another way, a very bad effect. Ministers must live. If they are not supported by the people, they must make a support for themselves. They must either resort to farming, to merchandize, or to school-keeping. Here then that time is completely occupied, which ought to be spent in theological studies, in visiting the people, in catechising, in lecturing, and in the discharge of all the duties resulting from the pastoral relation. And after a week spent in exhausting labour, the clergyman must ride a dozen miles, and preach just what he can, and how he can. The business of teaching, which is the common resort of our clergy, though it has been thought peculiarly suitable, is on many accounts objectionable. Besides the compleat occupation of time and the laborious drudgery of the employment, the office of a school-master, if not disreputable, is not honorable in this country. Nay, among many it is thought contemptible ; and he who is called school master, with an air of contempt, will hardly be heard in the pulpit, by the majority of people, with that respect, which the sacred office merits. And besides this, there will inevitably be dissatisfactions and uneasiness on account of the treatment of children ; the price of teaching ; the progress of scholars (for the parent you know always blames the teacher if his child does not learn) and many such things. And if the teacher finds it necessary to board his pupils, here is another source of uneasiness and dispute. So that the endless perplexities and vexations of this business, the time which it occupies, the confinement

which it requires, the disputes to which it may give occasion, seem to make it a very unsuitable profession for a minister of the gospel. And if it be so, I know not in what way they are to procure a living unless they could live upon air, as the camelion is said to do.

Mr. Jervas. But you surely would not wish to see an establishment of religion, and bishops rolling in the splendor of nabobs? Neither do I imagine you would desire the clergyman's office to be a sinecure.

Philander. By no means. Nor can such inferences be made from any thing which I have said. All that I desire, is that those who preach the gospel, should live of the gospel. In other words, I wish to see the clergy so supported, that they will neither be abject to the rich, nor haughty to the poor; neither needy nor luxurious. Now any house-keeper knows, or easily may know, how much is necessary in this country to support a family decently, without the necessity of vexatious cares and perplexities. This is what I wish for myself, this is what I want, for all who labour in the vineyard of the Lord. If every congregation had a good fund, which would annually produce from two to three hundred pounds, and which should be punctually paid to the pastor, I should be fully satisfied.

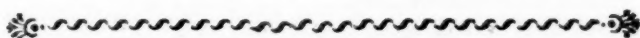
Mr. Jervas. But this would be called an establishment, and would be as strongly censured, as any establishment that ever was made.

Philander. Men might call it what they please; it would not be the worse for that. And from such an *establishment* as this, I am sure that no evils could be apprehended.— You will please to observe, that according to my plan, the living would be in the hands of the congregation; and the minister, of course, would always be dependent on the people. Should he labour with that zeal, that assiduity, that diligence, should he exhibit that pattern of patience, of faith, of charity, and disinterestedness, which becomes a minister of the gospel, his flock would, without doubt, continue that support which they might have engaged to give. Should he become worldly minded, negligent, and faithless, they could easily discard him. For at the farthest, any minister, at least, any one in our church, can be removed from his place in one year. And while this order of things continues, there can be no ground for apprehension of mischief from the clergy. But we are wandering from the point before us, I shall be glad to hear the observations of our friend Paulinus on this subject. It is true that between Merton

and myself a pretty dismal catalogue has been drawn out; but let us know the worst of the matter that no evil may come upon us unexpectedly.

Paulinus. I have little to add to what has already been said on this subject. I shall just observe, that there are some circumstances which increase the evils which you have mentioned, and which strongly counteract any remedies which may be applied to them. In the present order of affairs, the evils of which you complain, can only be removed by wise and vigorous measures adopted, and pursued for some time. You cannot expect to change the religious habits and sentiments of a people in any short period. But there is so great an emigration from our country, such a perpetual change of the inhabitants, that the young generation, which you begin to instruct and train up in the knowledge of religion, will, by the time they are old enough to take their places in the church, be wandering in the wilds of Louisiana, or seeking a habitation on some distant frontier. So that you will be perpetually beginning your schemes, and never bring them to a conclusion. Only think what a change has taken place in the inhabitants of this part of the country in the space of twenty years. This shifting and moving of the people, in fact, stops the progress of every kind of improvement whether of religion, literature, agriculture, or manufactures. And centuries will elapse before any amelioration can be expected.

Mr. Jervas. We have now had a view of the evils under which our church labours. Let us next hear the remedies by which you propose to counteract them.—But a servant informs me that dinner is ready.



FOR THE VIRGINIA RELIGIOUS MAGAZINE.

ON DRESS.

By what rules does religion require us to govern our conduct in regard to dress? The subject is by no means undeserving the attention of a serious mind: and the following observations may perhaps serve to throw some light upon it.

Some believe that we are expressly forbidden to wear gold, pearls, and in general, all costly or splendid apparel. This opinion is grounded on the following texts. "I will

— that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shame-facedness and sobriety; not with brodered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works. 1 Tim. ii. 8, 9, 10.”—“Whose adorning, let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel: but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God, of great price. 1 Pet. iii, 3, 4.” Though these directions were expressly given to women only, yet they are doubtless applicable in their true spirit to both sexes, and have an important bearing on the subject of dress generally. I think, however, that they are not correctly understood by those who consider them as precise specifications of things universally unlawful to be worn. They are, on this ground, too vague to be put in practice; and therefore could not be intended as such specifications. Not to wear gold or pearls is, I grant, intelligible enough in the most liberal sense. But what is the universal standard of costly array? How much must a thing cost to fall within the prohibition? And may not that be culpably costly to one person which would not be so to another in different circumstances of life? Farther: how do these literal interpreters understand the clause about the “putting on of apparel?” If it be dangerous to allegorize the holy scriptures too much, we should also take care not to expound them too literally, at the expense of their true import, and of common sense.—To me it is evident, not only from what has been said, but also from the very face and connexion of these apostolical injunctions, that they were intended, not to specify any particular articles of dress which should thus be rendered universally sinful; but to display and enforce a certain humble, spiritual temper of soul suitable to the christian profession. We are forbidden to indulge in extravagant, fantastical or indecent apparel; and are taught to value outward decorations of every kind far less than the holy ornaments of chastity, meekness, piety and good works. This, by the way, is the only safe and rational method of explaining the moral precepts of the gospel generally. We should investigate the spirit of them, and not the letter merely. They are comprehensive principles, forming the mind to dispositions of virtue and piety; and to be reduced to practice as occasions arise, under the direction of a watchful and well informed conscience.

But if the opinion about dress which I have rejected be chargeable with a tincture of narrowness and superstition, it deserves nevertheless to be treated with much more gentleness than the contrary extreme, into which many professing Christians run, to the reproach of their holy calling by the wicked, the offence of their more conscientious brethren, and the great injury of their own souls. It is not uncommon to see those who "name the name of Jesus Christ" indulging in frivolous and often immodest modes of dress, according to the dictates of fashion, the great goddess of this present world; and giving too plain reason, by their appearance and manners, to suspect that they have not "crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts," as becomes the disciples of a lowly and self-denying Saviour. And some, of whom we hope well in the main, seem to be faulty in this matter, merely for the want of a little instruction in their duty.

The question, then, recurs: how shall we regulate our conduct in regard to dress? In answer to which I humbly offer the following directions. They are of a general nature, I confess; and can be of no use to any but those who seek with prayer to know the path of duty, and are disposed to walk in it, when known, with conscientious care and circumspection. But I have such an idea of the efficacy of earnest persevering prayer in obtaining a gracious influence from the Holy Spirit upon our thoughts, and direction to our actions, that I believe a truly devout man, assisted by a few general rules, will be much more likely to conduct himself aright in this or any other instance, than any who trust merely to their own strength of judgment, though they may be the most laborious and profound adepts, in all the intricacies of moral speculation. But to return.

1. *Beware of excessive expense in dress.* If you ask me what is excessive expense? I answer, I do not know what it is in your case, because I am not acquainted with your circumstances. Pray to God to preserve you from error; and ask yourself occasionally such questions as these. Do I not owe debts, which ought to be discharged before I allow to myself or my family these indulgencies of dress? It is a divine precept, "owe no man any thing, but to love one another:" and may not my creditor be even suffering for the want of what I owe him, while I am about to lay it out on matters of pleasure and not of necessity? Do I take care to provide for my own household the things that are

profitable, before I indulge in these expensive decorations of the body? Are my children properly educated? Are my servants furnished with food, cloathing, and other comforts, such as they have a right to expect from a just and merciful master? Do I comply as becomes a Christian, with the calls of charity towards the poor and the needy around me? Do I give cheerfully and liberally of my substance to support the institutions of religion, and to extend the blessings of the gospel to those of my fellow creatures who are perishing for want of its light and influence?—If you will frequently recur to these inquiries, and such as these, and act with scrupulous care according to the result, you will very probably escape the sin of laying out too much money in dress.

2. *Beware of devoting too much time to dress.* Time is one of the most precious gifts of Heaven; once gone, it can never be recalled: and there are few follies so great as that of wasting time. Yet we frequently see people employing days or weeks in making elegant trifles for external decoration, to the neglect of the incumbent duties of their stations, the improvement of their minds in useful knowledge, and the infinitely important concerns of religion! At such an expense you are not permitted to obtain these troublesome ornaments; but must leave them to those who are enabled by their circumstances innocently to purchase them of the artist who gains a necessary livelihood by their fabrication. Can you spend the leisure hours of a month in needlework upon some little article of finery, while your understanding lies uncultivated, or any of the various duties of your holy calling remain unregarded, or partially and slightly performed? Tell me not that such an employment of time is not so bad as idleness, gaming, and other fashionable dissipations. Pleas of this kind, though they may be true, are always unworthy of a rational being, and shameful to a Christian. We are never to conclude that our time is justifiably spent because it might have been spent more criminally. To live harmlessly is not enough; we are called to live so as to glorify God, work out our own salvation, and do good to our fellow creatures. Take heed lest you fall into the doom of the unprofitable servant. — Time may be wasted also, and often is, in putting on our raiment, as well as in making it. To employ hours in nicely adjusting every part of our dress; and critically studying the outward appearance we are to make, is undoubtedly sinful; and is moreover a sure mark of a little

mind. A neat simplicity of appearance is every way the most lovely, and especially suitable to the Christian character. But what chiefly suggested this direction to my thoughts, was the great and common sin of devoting much of the morning of God's own day to this frivolous business. Has he not said, "remember the sabbath day to keep it holy?" Do not his people account it their privilege and their joy "to be in the Spirit on the Lord's day?" Do you call yourself a Christian, and yet prepare for the duties of the sanctuary by a few minutes only of prayer, debased perhaps by a cold and wearisome formality of performance; while you afford hours of the sacred day to the excessive adorning of your perishing body? I hope you can answer these questions to your comfort; but if not, be assured, disciples of Jesus, that these things ought not so to be.

3. *Beware of pride in dress.* I do not mean that you are to discard the principles of taste which belong to the subject. Slovenliness and voluntary rags argue a disgusting want of politeness; and either originate in a pitiable superstition, or approach very near to the confines of vice. Nor can I approve the uncouth singularity, which obstinately rejects the current mode of dress, merely because it is the mode. This is commonly neither more nor less than another form of pride, a more disagreeable and contemptible species of foppery. I am aware also of the various impressions made by modes of dress as well as manners upon the minds of mankind; impressions sometimes not a little useful: and therefore believe it a duty, especially to persons in public offices, to pay some careful attention to their dress. And in short, where things are otherwise innocent, I believe we may lawfully prefer and use those which please the eye and the fancy, for this very reason, that they are pleasing. But by pride in dress, I mean an anxious desire of costly and splendid apparel; a disposition to be thinking much of the gay appearance we make; to value ourselves upon it; to demand undue respect for it, a respect which we do not deserve, nor seek to deserve, by estimable qualities; and to treat with loftiness and contempt those of our fellow-creatures, perhaps far more wise and worthy than ourselves, who cannot, or will not put on the same glitter and magnificence. What a grovelling, what a hateful passion; And yet, (poor human nature!) how common is it! If you would avoid or eradicate it, cultivate genuine humility of soul by all the lessons of the gospel. But more particularly; reflect often on the origin of dress. The invention began in that mourn-

ful hour when man first fled from the voice and the presence of his God. It was resorted to as a substitute, a poor substitute indeed, for lost innocence. Remember, ye thoughtless ones, who pride yourselves in your gay attire, that this very attire is a badge of the fall, a standing memento that the true glory is departed from you. And is this a subject for boasting and vanity? — Consider also that dress forms no part of your intrinsic character; the most costly robes make you not in the least either wiser or better. They are a mere circumstance of fortune, which neither increases nor diminishes the estimation in which you ought to be held; and will be held by all who judge according to truth. The most dazzling external decorations cannot distinguish you from the most worthless and despicable of the human race. If, then, reason as well as religion forbids us to be proud even of the highest mental talents and accomplishments, what shall we think of the pride of dress? To what end do we pretend to be rational beings, if we suffer ourselves to become the slaves of such low and absurd passions?

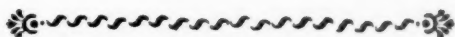
4. *Beware of immodesty in dress.* This kind of immodesty I cannot indeed define minutely. But you will find little or no difficulty in ascertaining the point for yourself in any particular instance, if you will endeavour to do it conscientiously, as in the presence of God. My feelings are frequently hurt by witnessing the violations of this rule. These enormous naked exhibitions.—I really do not know how to express myself. I dare not describe what I am compelled to behold in publick at noon-day. But let me expostulate with my dear countrywomen a little. What must we suppose to be your aim in these excessive disclosures? Is it to arouse and inflame that gross and hateful passion, which I am ashamed to mention to you by its own ugly name? Your delicacy feels a wound at the bare suggestion. Is it then a chaste, an honourable love that you seek; the fervent complacency and deep veneration of a virtuous mind? If so, the means are not at all adapted to the end. No; be it your wisdom to study the utmost purity of thought, appearance and manners. Adorn yourselves in modest apparel, with shame-facedness and sobriety;—with the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit. I do not think indeed that the purest mind needs to be insensible to the charms of a lovely female bosom. But you will lose nothing, believe me, by trusting that affair principally to our imaginations. And in the mean while we shall give you,

credit for modesty, a charm far more precious and more fascinating than all the symmetry and smoothness and complexion in the world.—But what do I say? Religion requires us to “avoid every appearance of evil;” “that every one should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour;” yea, that we should consider and guard our bodies as “the temples of the Holy Spirit.” And how can that blessed Guest dwell with immodesty and the indulgence of impure imaginations?

5. *Beware of violating the sixth commandment in dress.* You are surprised, perhaps, at this caution; but pray attend a little. The sixth commandment is, as you know, “thou shalt not kill.” What are the sins forbidden in this commandment? They are, “all taking away the life of ourselves or of others, except in case of public justice, lawful war, or necessary defence; *the neglecting or withdrawing the lawful and necessary means of preservation of life; and whatever tends to the destruction of the life of any.*” Is not this a just exposition? every reasonable person will readily admit that it is. Now, though I blush for the daughters of my country in saying it, I am compelled to say that, unless I am quite deceived in what I see and hear, there are modes of dress and modes of *not dressing* among us, which pointedly, and sometimes fatally violate this sacred and most important injunction. I not unfrequently see delicate females shivering with the winter’s piercing cold, and exposing themselves to the most dreadful diseases, by the mere voluntary want of clothing suitable to the season. By this mode, and by most preposterous and painful compressions of the body, I hear of one and another who have fallen into incurable disorders, destroyed the comfort of their lives, and brought themselves to an untimely grave. Such is the power of absurd fashion, in opposition to the care of health, the instinctive love of life itself, and the express command of the Almighty! And must it be so? Are there not inevitable calamities enow incident to mankind? Shall not only drunkenness, and debauchery and revenge destroy their ten thousands; but must even our modes of dress perform a lingering and torturing execution upon their thousands also; and shall they who call themselves christians too, be hurried along this destructive current?—But it is time to desist. To those who will reflect at all, these hints on the subject are abundantly sufficient. And as to the amendment of those votaries of tyrannical fashion, who will not reflect, I lay down my pen in despair. They will,

sooner or later, be brought to their senses by bitter experience : God grant it may not be too late for effectual reformation.

PHILANDER.



FOR THE VIRGINIA RELIGIOUS MAGAZINE.
HORSE-RACING DELINEATED,
In a letter to a friend.

DEAR SIR,

You wish me to tell you, why the people in this part of Virginia are so fond of horse-racing? A few weeks ago, observing in our public prints a good many jockey-club advertisements, I proposed to a neighbour of mine who loves racing, the same question you have proposed to me. His answer was, "there is a very great pleasure in the business, I assure you; but it is a pleasure which I don't suppose myself able to make you understand." Now does this answer satisfy you? I dare say it does not; for it did not satisfy me. Like oil thrown on fire, it enflamed my curiosity more than ever. Indeed I have often observed that when any subject of inquiry assumes an appearance of mystery, the inquirer, instead of timely giving it up, becomes the more eager to get to the bottom of it. Having therefore studied the racing system as deeply as I could, and sought information from every quarter within my reach; I will give you, with all simplicity, the result of my lucubrations.

The whole system of horse-racing appears to be built on these two principles, viz. *the pleasure of seeing one horse run faster than another horse, and the profit of taking as much money as you can out of your neighbour's pocket, because one horse runs faster than another horse.* If there be any other pillar which helps to support this grand fabric, I confess it has hitherto escaped my knowledge; and I should rejoice to be better informed.

You must know that the patrons of racing form themselves into societies, called jockey-clubs; each of which is officered with a president, treasurer, secretary, and so on. Each member pays an annual or semi-annual subscription; and the aggregate of these subscriptions becomes *the deserved prize* of him whose horse runs faster than all the other horses. The club meets from time to time to frame its laws and transact its affairs, with all the formality of a senate.— And its records are preserved as carefully as the archives of empires. So that whoever chooses may easily inform

himself *whether*, at any given time since the institution of the club, *the bay horse ran faster than the sorrel*; or *the sorrel than the bay*; or *whether the grey mare was the best horse on the field*.

For some weeks, perhaps months, before the periodical races, there is a mighty bustle in preparing the horses.— Besides grooms who are professionally trained to the business, servants are taken away from the vulgar insignificant employments of the farm and the plantation, and devoted to the stable. Nay, our gentleman racer himself becomes to a great degree an inhabitant of the same elegant apartments with his horses. His eyes by day, and his thoughts by night, are profoundly fixed upon them. And no wonder; for a very sublime object is in his view; namely to ascertain *whether his horse can run faster than his neighbour's horse*.

Then come on frequent trials of the horses in running. These you may call the prelude to the grand exhibition, or the preparatory rehearsal of the play. The horses are exercised daily. But the evening of the Sabbath day is accounted a favourite time for these prelusive races. Here you may see, on a wide old field, a large mixed mob of great vulgar and little vulgar, men folk and women folk, white and black, promiscuously gathered from the neighbourhood around, in order to see the horses run. It is true that common decency is prostrated, and the Almighty insulted by this profanation of the sacred day. But these are held to be small sacrifices for *the pleasure of seeing one horse run faster than another horse*.

The weights of the riders being precisely fixed by law, I have heard some curious hints about reducing a favourite rider to the proper weight, if needful, by artificial means; such as copious sweats, destroying the appetite by vinegar, and finally powerful catharticks. If the rider be a free boy, I suppose he is paid for these sufferings with money. If he be a slave, he may remunerate himself abundantly with the conscious pleasure of serving so merciful a master. The riders, however, white or black, have one comfortable prospect in common before them; namely, the chance, and it is a chance which has frequently been realized, of getting their limbs broken, or their brains dashed out, in the experiment of trying *to make one horse run faster than another horse*.

But now the grand period arrives, the day of final decision. Besides the honourable jockies themselves, with their horses and riders, a vast crowd of people assembles, of eve-

ry possible description, from the whole county, and even from several counties round. Every body takes a lively interest in the event of the day ; bets are innumerable ; ragged citizens who cannot give bread to their wives and children must at all events find something to hazard upon *bay* against *sorrel*, or *gray* against *roan* ; the company rushes like a cloud around the field to observe the movements of the horses ; the judges sit aloft in imperial state to give the decision of the contest ; the winners have their pockets filled with money, and their hearts with exultation ; the losers execrate their bad luck, and hope to come off better another time. When to all this you add a rich garnish of noise and dust, hard drinking, profane cursing and swearing, quarrelling, fighting bloody noses, black eyes, and fractured limbs, — the whole together forms a scene so delicious, so illustrious, that it absolutely baffles all power of description. And all these great things, you will remember, are but the accompaniments, the under-parts, to that still more splendid fact, that *one horse runs faster than another horse*.

The ladies too—don't lift your eyes with that stare of incredulity, for it is positively true,—the ladies come in vast numbers, and from great distances, to the race field to enjoy the scene. Fine ladies and coarse ladies, white, yellow and black ladies, some in carriages, some on horseback, and some on foot, are jumbled together here with great sociability, *to see one horse run faster than another horse*. They too win and loose money by the races as well as the gentlemen ; nor are they at all deficient in helping forward the obstreperous noise and bustle of the scene. You probably suppose that the properest place for a woman is the domestick fire side ; and that a lady of delicate sensibilities and conscious dignity cannot take a part in the boisterous tumult of a race-field. But our ladies have sublimer ideas, your home-born delights are most eagerly exchanged by them for the more exquisite and rational pleasure of *seeing one horse run faster than another horse*.

It would surprize you to learn how interesting a topick of conversation the races afford to our fashionables for weeks and months after they are over. With unabating fervour they perpetually recount the exploits of the day.—The state of crops, the prices of wheat and tobacco, the news from abroad, and even the political discussions of home, all give way to the events of the races. Courtships, marriages, births, deaths, and scandal itself, are for a time left to sleep in quiet : while the merits of the horses are minutely

discussed, and the points ascertained *how many seconds longer one horse was engaged in running two or four miles, than another horse.* And between ourselves, I am confident there are some fashionable people among us, whose tongues must become, in a great measure useless, for want of rational ideas, were it not that they are enabled to become highly voluble, entertaining and edifying by this inexhaustible theme of *one horse running faster than another horse.*

There are, nevertheless, a few strange precise people even in our part of Virginia, who peremptorily condemn the whole racing system. They assert that it is chargeable with all the guilt of any other species of *gaming*; that it is a nursery of idleness, and a long train of deplorable vices and miseries; in short, that it is an employment not only unfit for a christian, but even unworthy of a rational being. They express by turns their astonishment, their indignation, and their piety at the infatuation, as they call it, of their neighbours, who so shamefully sacrifice their welfare, temporal and eternal, *for the sake of seeing one horse run faster than another horse.*

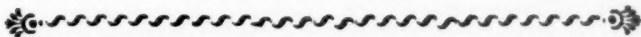
To all this the racers answer in two ways. The more hardy at once avow a sovereign contempt for all religion, and even for all morality founded on religious principle. They are philosophers, elevated far beyond the mists of vulgar prejudice. According to them, the man who fears God and keeps his commandments, who regards heaven and hell as realities of infinite importance, and who therefore separates himself scrupulously from the company of the wicked, is a poor fool, a slave of superstition; while he whose highest felicity consists in *seeing one horse run faster than another horse*, is a man of pleasure, a gentleman, a philosopher, who knows how to spend life to the greatest possible advantage. Here the controversy must necessarily end, unless you can prevail with these gentlemen to reason soberly on the subject. But this is impossible. They have determined neither to reason, nor be reasoned with.

Others, without avowing infidelity, defend their practice with equal force and demonstration in another way; something like this: "your taste, sir, may lead *you* to read the bible, hear sermons, make prayers, and such like. Now *my* taste leads me to the race-field. And *de gustibus non est disputandum*, you know; there is no disputing about tastes. Follow your taste; and don't find fault with me for following mine." Upon this the objectors vehemently

reply ; “ at this rate no vice can be condemnaed, however, enormous ; because every man will plead taste for the vice he loves. One has a great propensity to ardent spirits, and is rapidly destroying his body and soul by drunkenness.— But he pleads taste ; and therefore you must not blame him, nor warn him of his danger. Another prefers stealing your property to honest labour for a livelihood.— But he pleads taste ; and you must have no dispute with him, nor require him to correct his taste. A third wishes to debauch your wife or your daughter, because she suits his taste : and you say taste is an involuntary thing, not to be disputed about nor condemned. What would the world come to if your maxim were universally allowed in practice ? ” The best answer, I suppose, that our racing gentleman can give to this, will be to raise a loud contemptuous horse-laugh, take a glass of grog, or sit down closely to a game of all fours.

Having thus answered your inquiry to the best of my power, I leave you to your own meditation, by subscribing myself, dear sir, &c.

PHILANDER.



FOR THE VIRGINIA RELIGIOUS MAGAZINE.

THE GAMBLER'S LOGICK TRIED.

“ If I stake my money on a game, who has a right to censure it ? Have I not a right to do with my money, what I please ? ” No sir, you have no such right. Your money, your faculties, and even your life, are not your own, but God's property. He has committed them to you as a trust, to be employed for his glory and the good of mankind ; and of your faithfulness herein he will call you to a strict account.— Besides you transgress a positive law in coveting your neighbour's money, and taking it from him if you can, without any reasonable equivalent. “ No ; I do give him an equivalent, namely, the chance of taking my money. ” That is, you and your brother gambler make an agreement that one shall pocket the other's money without any real equivalent, any valuable consideration at all ; and the game is to decide which of you it shall be. You think yourself entitled to commit an act of manifest injustice against your neighbour, because you give him a chance, as you call it, of committing the same act of manifest injustice against you ! If this be sound reasoning, I should be glad to know what you mean by sophistry.

PHILANDER.

ANECDOTE.

A conceited young man was haranguing a company, greatly to their entertainment as he thought, with objections against the holy scriptures. An old lady sat in a corner of the room, poring upon a book, and apparently inattentive to what was said. At length raising her head, and fixing her eyes solemnly upon our orator, "Johnny, said she, you'll never shine in *this* world; and so you'd better prepare for the *next*." It is said Johnny uttered no more infidelity in that company. W.

FOR THE VIRGINIA RELIGIOUS MAGAZINE.

On reading the Holy Scriptures.

1. My God, thy heavenly aid afford
That I may understand thy word;
And while I read the sacred page,
O let thy truths my heart engage.
2. Father of lights enable me
Thy glory more and more to see,
Thy wisdom, holiness and grace
Sweetly display'd in Jesus' face.
3. Strengthen my faith that I may prove
The boundless riches of thy love:
Be Christ my hope, my only rest,
And let my soul in him be blest.
4. O make me truly wise to know
The duties thou wouldst have me do;
And make it still my dearest choice
In all things to obey thy voice.
5. Teach me to watch against my foes
Who would my growth in grace oppose:
O may I by thy pow'r subdued
The world, the flesh, and Satan too.
6. Thus let me by thy love constrain'd,
And by thy promises sustain'd,
Pursue the path of holiness
Till I in heaven behold thy face.

ASPASIO.