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BIOGRAPHY

LIFE OF THE REV. WILLIAM TENNENT.

AMONG the duties which every generation owes to those which are to succeed it, we may reckon the careful delineation of the characters of those whose example deserves, and may invite imitation. Example speaks louder than precept, and living practical religion has a much greater effect on mankind than argument or eloquence. Hence, the lives of pious men become the most important sources of instruction and warning to posterity: while their exemplary conduct affords the best commentary on the religion they professed. But when such men have been remarkably favoured of God, with unusual degrees of light and knowledge, and have been honoured by the special and extraordinary influence of his Holy Spirit, and by the most manifest and wonderful interpositions of divine Providence in their behalf, it becomes a duty of more than common obligation, to hand down to posterity the principal events of their lives, together with such useful inferences as they naturally suggest. A neglect of this duty, even by persons who may be conscious of the want of abilities necessary for the complete biographer, is greatly culpable; for, if the strictest attention be paid to the truth of the facts related, and all exaggeration or partial representation be carefully avoided, the want of other furniture can be no excuse for burying in oblivion that conduct, which, if known, might edify and benefit the world.

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The writer of these memoirs has difficulties of a peculiar kind to encounter, in attempting to sketch the life of that modest, humble, and worthy man, whose actions exercises and sentiments he wishes to record. Worldly men, who are emulous to transmit their names to following ages, take care to leave such materials for the future historian, as may secure the celebrity which they seek. But the humble follower of the meek and lowly Jesus, whose sole aim is the glory of God, in the welfare of immortal souls, goes on, from day to day, as seeing Him who is invisible, careful to approve himself only to the Searcher of hearts, regardless of worldly fame or distinction, and leaving it to his heavenly Father to reward him openly, in the day of final account. The writer of such a man's life, must principally rely on a personal acquaintance with him, and the communications of his intimate friends, for the information which shall be imparted to the public. In these circumstances it is peculiarly embarrassing if some of the facts to be recorded are of such a nature, that it is most desirable to have their authenticity so fully established, that incredulity shall be confounded, and the sneer of the sceptical and profane lose its effect. But the writer of the following narrative, though placed in these circumstances and having such facts to detail, has nevertheless determined to proceed: He has refreshed and corrected his own recollection, by the most careful inquiries that he could possibly make of others, until he is well assured, that what he shall state is incontestible truth. From the very nature of several things of which an account will be given, they do not indeed admit of any other direct testimony than that of the remarkable man to whom they relate. But if there ever was a person who deserved to be believed unreservedly on his own word, it was he. He possessed an integrity of soul and a soundness of judgment, which did actually secure him an unlimited confidence from all who knew him. Every species of deception, falsehood, and exaggeration he abhorred and scorned. He

was an Israelite indeed in whom there was no guile. With such materials, then, as have been mentioned, and for a work of such character as has been hinted, the writer has undertaken his task. He has undertaken what he would most gladly have resigned to an abler hand; but from which, as no other offered, he *dared* not withhold his own. He could wish that speculative and even unbelieving minds might be instructed and convinced by these memoirs. But his principal object, and that in which he trusts he shall not be entirely disappointed, is to direct, assist, and comfort pious souls, groaning under the pressure of the calamities which they often have to endure in their pilgrimage through the wilderness of this world.

The late Rev. WILLIAM TENNENT, of Freehold, in the county of Monmouth, in the state of New-Jersey, of whom we write, was the second son of the Rev William Tennent, minister of the gospel at Neshaminy, in Bucks county, in the state of Pennsylvania. This last gentleman was originally a minister of the church of England, in the then kingdom of Ireland, where he was born and received his education. He was chaplain to an Irish nobleman, but being conscientiously scrupulous of conforming to the terms imposed on the clergy of that kingdom, he was deprived of his living. He now became acquainted with the famous Gilbert Kennedy, of —, a presbyterian minister, who had also been persecuted for his religious principles, and soon after married his daughter. Finding it difficult to continue at home with any satisfactory degree of usefulness, and his family increasing, after a few years he determined to emigrate to America, where he was encouraged to hope for a greater liberty of conscience, as well as the prospect of being employed in extending the Redeemer's kingdom in that new world. He arrived at Philadelphia in the summer of 1718, with his wife, four sons, and one daughter. His sons were, Gilbert, who was afterwards the pastor of the second presbyterian church in Philadelphia; William the subject of these memoirs; John, who became pastor

of the church at Freehold, and died at the age of twenty-five years; and Charles, afterwards minister of the presbyterian church at Whiteclay creek whence he removed to Buckingham, in Maryland.

William Tennent, the father, on his first coming to America, settled at East Chester, in the then province of New York, and afterwards removed to Bedford. In a short time he was called to Bucks county, in Pennsylvania, and preached at Bensalem and Smithfield; but soon after settled permanently at Neshaminy, in the same county. Being skilled in the Latin language, so as to speak and write it almost as well as his mother tongue, a good proficient also in the other learned languages, and well read in divinity, he determined to set up a school for the instruction of youth, particularly of those designed for the gospel ministry, as the best service he could render to God and his new adopted country: education being then at a very low ebb. There appeared, in his apprehension, a very large field for the propagation of the gospel, could a sufficient number of faithful labourers be found for so great a harvest. A learned ministry, he well knew, was necessary to the sure foundation of the church of Christ, especially in a new country, so peculiarly exposed to every invader, and where the enemy might so successfully sow tares among the wheat. In pursuance of this design, he established an academy, and built a house, since known by the name of the log college:

Soon after his arrival in Bucks county, on full consideration, he left the church of England, and, to enlarge his sphere of usefulness, determined to join the presbyterian church.—Accordingly, he applied to the synod of Philadelphia for admission into their communion; and, on due examination, and complying with their stated rules, he was very cordially received. At the first meeting of the synod afterwards, he addressed that venerable body, in an elegant Latin oration, which added greatly to his celebrity, and increased the hopes of his friends as to the success of the institution he had founded. To

erect and support such an important seminary of learning, out of his own private purse, at that early period, in a new country just rising from a savage wilderness, and to devote himself to so severe a service, in addition to his pastoral charge, was a boon to his generation, that at this day cannot be easily nor sufficiently appreciated.

His expectations, in a few years, were more than realized. In this institution the principal men of the day, and many of the presbyterian clergy, were educated, and added greatly to the increase and usefulness of their churches. The late Rev. Messrs. Rowland, Campbell, Lawrence, Beatty, Robinson, and Samuel Blair, with many others, were among the number of his pupils, and thought themselves honoured by being considered as sons of this humble seminary. Here also his own four sons received their education, and were prepared for their important services. Had these been the only fruits of that infant academy, America would have reason to rejoice, and to render thanks to that God who directed this gentleman to visit her shores.

His second son WILLIAM, who is the subject of these sketches, was born on the 3d day of June, 1705, in the county of Antrim, in Ireland, and was just turned of thirteen years when he arrived in America. He applied himself, with much zeal and industry, to his studies, and made great proficiency in the languages, particularly in the Latin. Being early impressed with a deep sense of divine things, he soon determined to follow the example of his father and elder brother, by devoting himself to the service of God in the ministry of the gospel. His brother Gilbert being called to the pastoral charge of the church at New-Brunswick, in New Jersey, and making a very considerable figure as a useful and popular preacher; William determined, as he had completed his course in the languages, to study divinity under his brother. Accordingly he left his father's house with his consent and by his advice, and went to New-Brunswick. At his departure from home, which was considered as his setting out in life, his fa-

ther addressed him with great affection, commending him to the favour and protection of that God, from whom he himself had received so much mercy, and who had directed him in all his migrations. He gave him a small sum of money, as the amount of all he could do for him, telling him that if he behaved well and did his duty, this was an ample provision for him; and if he should act otherwise, and prove ungrateful to a kind and gracious God, it was too much and more than he deserved. Thus with a pittance, and the blessing of a pious and affectionate parent, of more consequence than thousands of pounds, the young student set out in the world.

After a regular course of study in theology, Mr. Tennent was preparing for his examination by the presbytery as a candidate for the gospel ministry. His intense application affected his health, and brought on a pain in his breast and a slight hectic. He soon became emaciated, and at length was like a living skeleton. His life was now threatened. He was attended by a physician, a young gentleman who was attached to him by the strictest and warmest friendship. He grew worse and worse, till little hope of life was left. In this situation his spirits failed him, and he began to entertain doubts of his final happiness. He was conversing, one morning, with his brother, in Latin, on the state of his soul, when he fainted and died away. After the usual time, he was laid out on a board, according to the common practice of the country, and the neighbourhood were invited to attend his funeral on the next day. In the evening, his physician and friend returned from a ride into the country, and was afflicted beyond measure at the news of his death. He could not be persuaded that it was certain; and on being told that one of the persons who had assisted in laying out the body thought he had observed a little tremor of the flesh under the arm, although the body was cold and stiff, he endeavoured to ascertain the fact. He first put his own hand into warm water to make it as sensible as possible, and then felt under the arm, and at the

heart, and affirmed that he felt an unusual warmth, though no one else could. He had the body restored to a warm bed, and insisted that the people, who had been invited to the funeral, should be requested not to attend. To this the brother objected as absurd, the eyes being sunk, the lips discoloured, and the whole body cold and stiff. However, the doctor finally prevailed; and all probable means were used, to discover symptoms of returning life. But the third day arrived, and no hopes were entertained of success but by the doctor, who never left him night nor day. The people were again invited, and assembled to attend the funeral. The doctor still objected, and at last confined his request for delay to one hour, then to half an hour, and finally to a quarter of an hour. He had discovered that the tongue was much swoln, and threatened to crack. He was endeavouring to soften it, by some emollient ointment put upon it with a feather, when the brother came in, about the expiration of the last period, and mistaking what the doctor was doing, for an attempt to feed him, manifested some resentment, and in a spirited tone, said, "It is shameful to be feeding a lifeless corpse;" and insisted, with earnestness, that the funeral should immediately proceed. At this critical and important moment, the body, to the great alarm and astonishment of all present, opened its eyes, gave a dreadful groan, and sunk again into apparent death. This put an end to all thoughts of burying him, and every effort was again employed in hopes of bringing about a speedy resuscitation. In about an hour, the eyes again opened, a heavy groan proceeded from the body, and again all appearance of animation vanished. In another hour life seemed to return with more power, and a complete revival took place, to the great joy of the family and friends, and to the no small astonishment and conviction of very many who had been ridiculing the idea of restoring to life a dead body.

Mr. Tennent continued in so weak and low a state for six weeks, that great doubts were entertained of his final recove-

ry. However, after that period he recovered much faster, but it was above twelve months before he was completely restored. After he was able to walk the room, and to take notice of what passed around him, on a Sunday afternoon, his sister, who had staid from church to attend him, was reading in the Bible, when he took notice of it, and asked her what she had in her hand. She answered that she was reading the Bible. He replied, "What is the Bible? I know not what you mean." This affected the sister so much that she burst into tears, and informed him, that he was once well acquainted with it. On her reporting this to the brother when he returned, Mr. Tennent was found upon examination, to be totally ignorant of every transaction of his life previous to his sickness. He could not read a single word, neither did he seem to have any idea of what it meant. As soon as he became capable of attention, he was taught to read and write, as children are usually taught, and afterwards began to learn the Latin language under the tuition of his brother. One day as he was reciting a lesson in Cornelius Nepos, he suddenly started, clapped his hand to his head, as if something had hurt him, and made a pause. His brother asking him what was the matter, he said, that he felt a sudden shock in his head, and it now seemed to him as if he had read that book before. By degrees his recollection was restored, and he could speak the Latin as fluently as before his sickness. His memory so completely revived, that he gained a perfect knowledge of the past transactions of his life, as if no difficulty had previously occurred. This event, at the time, made a considerable noise, and afforded, not only matter of serious contemplation to the devout christian, especially when connected with what follows in this narration, but furnished a subject of deep investigation and learned inquiry to the real philosopher and curious anatomist.

(To be continued.)

ESSAYS MORAL AND RELIGIOUS.

FOR THE VIRGINIA RELIGIOUS MAGAZINE.

VIVAX AND CONTUMAX—A DIALOGUE.

It will be recollected, that at the close of the dialogue between Paulinus and Vivax which appeared in Number 2, Vol. 2, of the Virginia Religious Magazine, Vivax appeared to entertain a favourable opinion, of the christian religion. He had for some time been convinced of the truth of the scriptures; but concealing his real sentiments he resisted the light and affected to treat the gospel, and its ordinances with contempt. He at length became unable to make any farther resistance. Like a servant who had known his masters will, and obstinately refused to obey it, he viewed himself justly exposed to many stripes. To expect relief from the anguish of a troubled spirit, in the haunts of vice and folly or from the speculations of *Philosophers*, to Vivax now appeared no better than madness. The *Philosophers* could not extract the dagger which sin had planted in his bosom; their remedies had no tendency to check the progress of the disease which preyed on his vitals. The voice of an accusing conscience could no longer be silenced, by the clamorous mirth of fools. Vivax is a sinner: the law of God condemns him as an *inexcusable* sinner. What can he do, or whether shall he fly to escape deserved vengeance. Behold he prayeth; and his prayer is expressed in the language of the humble Publican *God be merciful to me a sinner*. Prostrate in the dust, he presumes not to raise an eye towards heaven; he can scarcely hope to partake of the crumbs, which fall from the childrens table. But the Father beholds the returning prodigal afar off: God who looks with complacency on the contrite heart in an unexpected hour, surprised him with a discovery of the exceeding riches of his grace, in Christ Jesus. The kind invitation of the Saviour, sweetly calmed the tumult of his bosom, "Come unto me all

ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' To this invitation, with rapture he replied, in the words of Peter, 'Lord to whom shall I go but unto thee, thou hast the words of eternal life:' Life—Eternal life was what he sought; and from the Savior of sinners he obtained, the inestimable gift. Ah! what tears of penitential sorrow now flowed at the recollection of his former impiety? The reception of pardon for his accumulated offences, from the gracious Savior, whom he had so often reviled, shewed him the baseness of his conduct; and so effectually convinced him of his obligations to Christ, that his only ambition now, is to spend and be spent—to live and die in his service.

It soon appeared that Vivax would stand in need of all the wisdom and fortitude, which he had, in a short time, been endowed in the school of Christ. The news of his conversion quickly spread through the neighbourhood; and with unusual surprise and regret it was heard in every gay circle that 'Saul also was among the Prophets.' Returning one evening from a social meeting, which had been instituted by a few pious people, for their mutual edification, Vivax met with one of his former companions, by the name of Contumax. This man once appeared to be near the kingdom of heaven, but having long since apostatized; he now appears to be desirous to blot out the remembrance of his former prayers, and apparent devotion, by means well calculated to answer this purpose, and at the same time to sear the conscience and harden the heart.

Contumax having heard of his friend's conversion, accosted him in these words. Is it possible that this is my friend Vivax? *Upon my honour sir*, you are so much altered since our last interview that I scarcely knew you. I fear you are becoming melancholy. You certainly have not enjoyed your usual portion of health. Come Sir, I expect presently to meet with a number of jovial fellows, who have agreed to spend the even-

ing together, if you will consent to make one of the party, we will endeavour to restore you to your wonted good humour and cheerfulness.

V. I thank you Sir, for your concern for my welfare but must beg to be excused. As for bodily health or cheerfulness, I never enjoyed a greater portion of either of these blessings; and I suppose you have heard, that I have lately determined, to spend my social hours with people who are seriously disposed.

C. Yes Sir, I have been told but was unwilling to credit the information, that you had become very religious indeed,—quite pharisaical. Religion it seems, is your favorite topick in conversation, an evening of every week is spent with a set of enthusiasts, in prayer and praise and what you call religious conversation: It would grieve me to find these reports true.

V. They are strictly true Sir, I am just now on my return from one of those meetings, in which for the purpose of promoting our mutual edification, a few of us have agreed to unite in social prayer and praise, and religious conversation; And I assure you Sir, I now consider these exercises, among the most laudable in which we can possibly be engaged. The few hours which I have devoted to the service of God in this way, I reflect on with peculiar pleasure, and have only to regret that, so late in life I have experienced that which renders life desirable.

C. I am sorry to find you so egregiously mistaken. Can any thing be more evident than that religion is seated in the heart—that it consists in a secret intercourse between God and the soul, and consequently, that it neither can, nor ought to be known by any, except God and the creature that is under its influence. What has the world to do with my religion?

V. I should be sorry sir, if an explanation of the christian religion, or a defence of any of its peculiar doctrines or precepts was expected from me. I consider myself a Novice in these matters, and would willingly sit as a learner at the feet of

the weakest of Gods people. I cannot however, discover any thing very formidable in the objections, which you have stated, against my present practice. I am willing to agree with you, that religion has its seat in the heart—that the good man maintains a secret, spiritual intercourse with God; of which the world cannot have that certain knowledge which the pious man himself possesses. But I deny that a good man either can or ought to conceal his religion from the world.

C. Well Sir, I shall be glad to hear some of your new divinity; but if you will take the Bible for your guide, I suspect you will make but a weak defence, either of your practice, or of the opinions you have now expressed.

V. Pray Sir, what do you find in the Bible, so irreconcilable either to my sentiments or practice.

C. It is not to one, or a few passages I would direct your attention; but to the numerous reproofs, which were justly given, by Jesus Christ to the Pharisees; for their long public prayers, their fastings and particularly for their outward shew of religion. Were they not reprobated for these things, once and again as arrant hypocrites. Were not the most dreadful anathemas pronounced against them? And will you notwithstanding all this not only argue in favor of their procedure, but dare to immitate them in your meetings for prayer and religious conversation.

V. As you have appealed to the scriptures as the standard by which my sentiments and practice are to be tried, I consider myself bound to give its full weight to every argument drawn from that source; but I suppose you will agree that no construction ought to be put on any passage of scripture, which would contradict the general strain of the sacred volume, or the plain import of any other passage. You will agree I presume, that the scriptures shall explain themselves.

C. This rule must be admitted with regard to all writings.

V. Well sir admitting this rule, what will you do with such passages as these? Let your light so shine before men that

they may see your good works. Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together. For where two or three are met together in my name, there am I in the midst of them. He that confesseth me before men, him will I also confess before the angels of God; but he that denieth me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.' To explain these passages in such a way as to make it appear credible, that the Author of christianity intended that his disciples should pass through this world unnoticed or unknown, is impossible. No Sir, like a city erected on an eminence, the good man is to attract the notice of every passenger; not by an ostentatious display of his religion, nor by hypocritical pretensions to a greater degree of piety than he possesses, but by a uniform course of piety towards God, and charity to men. You certainly can not suppose, Sir, that the Pharisees were condemned, because they *prayed*, nor that the length nor publicity of their prayers was the procuring cause of the judgments denounced against them. Jesus Christ who condemned them, hath commanded us to 'pray one for another—to pray always with all manner of prayer.' No sir, *insincerity* was the evil for which the Pharisees were condemned; their avowed object was to please God; but their real design was to deceive men, and gratify their own pride and avarice. True religion, you have said, is seated in the heart; their only concern was to keep clean the outside of the cup. They fasted for strife, and made long prayers in the streets that they might appear to men, to be eminently pious, and thus gain an opportunity to devour widows houses, and commit other acts of secret villainy, without suspicion. The judgments of heaven were not inflicted on them for their fastings or their prayers; but for their hypocrisy, their pride, their avarice, and all the other vile tempers which they so carefully endeavoured to cover, with the cloak of religion.

C. Your opinion of these deceivers is certainly correct, they doubtless were a very hypocritical, designing set of men; and I wish the world may keep a jealous eye, on the crafty

imitators of these same hypocritical pharisees, who abound every where, and cease not to impose on the credulous multitude.

V. It is very probable, Sir, that men are still to be found in every part of the christian world, who are infected with the *leaven of the pharisees*, and they are certainly the pests of society, wherever they exist. But if, to be like a pharisee, a man must pray frequently, and publicly, and be conformed in all his deportment to the letter of the law, I suppose their imitators are not numerous amongst us. I apprehend that neither church nor state has any occasion to dread their crafty machinations.

C. But you gave it as your opinion, a while ago, that *a good man can not conceal his religion from the world*; I would be glad to hear a defence of this doctrine. We certainly on becoming religious, are not necessarily obliged to lay our hearts open to the inspection of mankind. Men may observe our actions, but you agree that religion exists in the heart; now, should it even be admitted, that a very great alteration is effected in the heart of a sinner, by what you call *grace*; it certainly cannot turn him inside outwards.

V. Tell me Contumax, is it not your opinion that there is a very great variety among mankind, as to morals? Are not some virtuous and others vicious?

C. I certainly entertain this opinion, otherwise I could not have condemned the Pharisees, ancient and modern, as I have just now done without hesitation.

V. Well sir, by what criterion do you judge when you approve or condemn your fellow-men? On what is your opinion founded, when you say this is a very religious, pious man; that is a hypocritical deceiver? You cannot discern the heart.

C. Undoubtedly the character of the man must be fixed by his conduct.

V. Very true. If therefore you should discover a professor of religion, exhibiting in his conduct the evidences of

pride, of avarice, or of a deceitful or malignant temper; I presume you would not hesitate in pronouncing him a bad man, whatever he might say respecting the goodness of his heart, or a secret friendly intercourse with the Deity.

C. No sir, the tree must be known by its fruits.

V. Well sir, keeping this in mind, suppose you were asked for your opinion of a professor of religion, who for many years had given the most satisfactory evidence of his christian character; who had been a shining example of piety, of patience, resignation, humility, justice, temperance, charity, and of every other amiable quality?

C. I would certainly pronounce him one of the best of men.

V. You conform strictly to my rule in practice, whilst in words you condemn it. You say the world has no business with a man's religion, because religion is a business of the heart, to which they can have no access: and yet you condemn without hesitation the professor of religion who does not exhibit in his conduct unequivocal evidence of the purity of his heart. In this instance you pass just sentence though by so doing you contradict the principle on which you set out, and acknowledge with me that *a good man cannot conceal his religion.*

C. Well admitting that a good man cannot, entirely conceal his character, I am nevertheless of the opinion, that he ought to pass through the world with as much secrecy as possible.

V. I am afraid Contumax, the good man would find it a difficult undertaking to accommodate his conduct entirely to your taste; is his conduct fair and upright? He is a pharisee. Does he pretend to purity of heart, whilst his conduct fails to justify these pretensions! He is a notorious hypocrite. Your scheme, like a two-edged sword, must slay the righteous, wherever he might fly for shelter.

C. Well sir, if my sentiments are condemned as entirely incorrect, will you give me your opinion on this interesting subject?

V. The opinion which I have lately adopted is, that there are two extremes which ought to be carefully avoided. One is an ostentatious display of religion; the language of which is *stand by thyself, I am holier than thou*: the other is, a neglect of the duties enjoined in the scriptures, whenever a discharge of these duties would fix the public attention on us as the followers of Christ. People who eventually fall into these different extremes, differ very much in their conduct as it respects religion; but it may be strongly suspected that the predominant dispositions of their hearts are not very dissimilar. The Pharisee displays his pride and his desire of human applause, in all his prayers, his fasting, and ritual worship; the man who desires to creep secretly into heaven, shews as clearly in a different way, that he is more anxious to obtain the praise of men, than the approbation of God. The man of true piety will, with equal caution, avoid each of these extremes. He will do nothing with a view to be thought righteous by men, nor will he leave any duty undone, through fear of reproach or the finger of scorn.

C. But sir, we will return, if you please, to your prayer meetings. Taking it for granted that a good man may be known by his fruits, I hope you will agree that a prayer is no infallible evidence of true piety, since it appears that hypocrites have rendered themselves conspicuous by the length and fervency of their prayers; and as it would be wrong to pronounce a man pious because he prays, must it not be equally rash to suspect a man's piety because he does not pray?

V. It will be readily granted that men have been, and still may be, induced by improper motives to assume a cloak of religion—that they may fast and pray and be thought pious by men, whilst their principles are an abomination to God. But will the insincerity and hypocrisy of some who pray, be thought sufficient to free others from an obligation to perform this duty? The question is, Hath God commanded us to pray unto him? If he has, then the man who refuses to pray is a

rebel: without a breach of charity, I do not say we may *suspect* the piety of such a man, but, that the word of God condemns him as a graceless sinner. There are a thousand things to which your observations would apply, as well, as to the duty of prayer. A bad man may feed the hungry—cloathe the naked—visit the fatherless and widows in their afflictions.—He may be just in his dealings—peaceable in his dispositions and a careful observer of all his relative duties, and may be a bad man still; destitute of the love of God, and of a sincere desire to please him, but would you therefore conclude, that we ought not to suspect the man to be destitute of piety who is unjust, unmerciful, destitute of charity and of natural affection, and a neglecter of all relative duties?

C. But you cannot suppose Vivax, that the Supreme Being is unacquainted with the wants of his creatures. Why therefore will you presume to give him information, as though he were ignorant?

V. You are greatly mistaken Sir, if you suppose that christians pray on the supposition that God is ignorant of their wants: They approach him as the Omniscient searcher of hearts, under the joint influence of his command, and kind invitation, that they may obtain the blessings which he knows to be necessary for them, in a way calculated to remind them of their dependance, and to dispose them carefully to improve the favours bestowed.

C. But God either intends to afford us the blessings we desire, or he does not. If these blessings are destined for us, we shall doubtless receive them whether we pray or not; if they are not intended for us, we shall not obtain them by our entreaties. God is of one mind, and his purposes change not.

V. I certainly believe, Sir, that we shall receive the favors which are destined for us; and likewise, that these blessings will be received in the manner in which God hath determined to bestow them. Now, that God should have determined that

certain favors should be received by his creatures, who would humbly bow before him, acknowledge their dependance on him, and ask for these favors as a gracious gift ; which should not be received by the prayerless sinner, must, I think, have appeared probable, without the information given in his word. It is certainly analogous to his dealings with mankind in other respects. The husbandman might say, If God hath determined that I shall have a crop, it must be so, whether I cultivate and sow my fields or not ; but that he may be thankful for the precious grain with which his barns are filled ;—that he may be disposed to cultivate the habits of industry, temperance and frugality, he is convinced by daily experience, that no secret determination of the supreme Being—no fertilizing influence of the involving sun, or of the descending rain, will fill the barns of the sluggard with plenty.

C. But can you suppose that the Supreme Being is perpetually altering his plan in compliance with the requests of his creatures ? Or that any new or unforeseen event can take place, to change his determination ? I presume you would shudder at the impious supposition.

V. No such supposition is necessary on the plan for which I contend. If God hath assured us that if we ask for any thing agreeable to his will, he will hear us ; and that we shall receive the blessings for which we ask : it requires no alteration in the divine plan to bestow these favours ; it was foreknown and intended that we should receive them, and that they should be bestowed in answer to our prayers.

C. Well Vivax, if you must pray, why will you not confine your prayers to your own closet ? What benefit can you expect to derive from social prayer, which might not be obtained, in an equal degree at home without exposing yourself to the derision of all your respectable friends, by associating with a set of praying enthusiasts ?

V. I would not willingly be deprived of the advantages of private devotion, or neglect the duties of the closet, nor am I more willing to forsake the assemblies of the saints, or live destitute of the advantages of publick worship. We, whom you are pleased to stigmatize as enthusiasts, gladly associate as one family, to ask our common Father, for blessings which we need in common to pray with and for each other. Our distresses, our fears, our enemies are the same, and we approach with one heart and one voice *to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.* We bear one another's burdens—sympathize with each other in affliction—mingle our tears together; and our joys by being mutual, are redoubled. Believe me Sir, in our little assembly we sometimes receive an antipast of heaven. There the happy throng unite, without a discordant heart, in acts of praise and adoration; here we attempt, in our humble forms, to imitate their strains; and are happy to find that the attempt is not made in vain. *They that wait on the Lord renew their strength, they mount up on wings like an eagle; they run and are not weary—they walk and faint not.*

C. Well Vivax, I do suppose it would be possible to gain admittance into heaven (if there is such a place) without all this reading and praying, and toil. Why, my dear Sir, you appear to have committed the greater part of the Bible to memory since our last interview, notwithstanding the large portion of your time, which must have been wasted in hearing two or three sermons in the week, attending prayer meetings, engaging in religious conversation, and in acts of private devotion. Certainly future happiness is attainable without all this drudgery.

V. A punctual performance of religious duties, would doubtless prove an irksome task, to an irregenerate sinner. He has no relish for this employment. But let his heart be changed by divine grace—let him feel the constraining influence of the love of Christ; and it will be no longer a disagreeable task to read the scriptures, to pray to God, or to praise

him. No? the ways of wisdom are pleasant to the renewed soul, and all her paths are peace.

C. It may be as you say Vivax. But what objections can you have, to unbend your mind occasionally with a little innocent mirth, or harmless amusement? Come Sir, there is no religion in being mopish. Would you consent once more to resume your seat in our club, I am persuaded you would return to your devotional exercises, with much more life and energy.

V. What you denominate *innocent mirth* or *harmless amusements*, to me may not appear equally inoffensive. If your entertainments are of the same kind now as formerly: if they are enjoyed at the expense of the reputation of other people, or of a man's own fortune, health, reputation, or religion; they must not be called innocent. If the mirth of your club, is excited now, as it was formerly; by that which calls for lamentation and weeping; by the scurrilous remarks of hardened infidels respecting certain portions of the sacred writings; or by the imperfections, real or pretended, of some who bear the christian name; I assure you Sir, I would make an awkward figure in your assembly. A participation of these pleasures would not invigorate me for the duties of the church or closet. Ah! no, I have not yet forgotten *the wormwood and the gall*. But, as I have stated some of the advantages which result from the exercises of social worship, in which we engage in our weekly meetings; will you be so obliging as to contrast with these, some of the advantages expected from your social meetings. Come Sir, I would be glad to compare notes with you. Convince me, that by forsaking the assemblies of the saints, and associating with the members of your club, or of any other, I can obtain blessings superior to those I have stated, and I will consent to accompany you this evening, and never fail hereafter to make one of your party.

C. It is not necessary to inform you Vivax, of the beneficial effects of our institution, as you have so often been an eye-

witness of them. How often have you seen the members assemble, with downcast eyes and gloomy countenances, like a pack of insolvent debtors? And have you not as often been surprised and delighted at the sudden change? On their arrival at the place of rendezvous, how quickly their countenances brighten—their foreheads are smoothed—their eyes sparkle, and before a separation takes place, all are as happy as kings. There—the wise man, and the fool, the honest man, and the knave, are equally welcome. There is found a sovereign antidote against every anxious care; a short and easy method to shake off the fears of death and judgment: the remedy has succeeded in a hundred cases where preaching and praying have proved ineffectual. Who ever saw a member of our society take leave of his companions with a heavy heart? In short, Sir, I have made up my mind—you have talked of religion and quoted scripture until I feel chilled to the heart. I cannot relish *your* enjoyments and therefore wish not to partake of them. Were I even persuaded, that important advantages would result from devotional exercises, I cannot, *will not pray.*

As Contumax uttered these words a dreadful peal of thunder issued from an angry cloud which had collected unobserved, while they were engaged in conversation, and now threatened to burst upon them. They soon despaired of reaching any place of refuge, the rain descended in torrents—the earth seemed to tremble to its centre, and the sturdy oaks in every direction were smote by the lightning and shivered into splinters. Contumax turned pale; for a time he endeavoured to conceal his terrors and to follow Vivax with a firm step. He at length fell prostrate on the earth, as if touched by the hand which arrested Saul of Tarsus, and exclaimed, “*Lord have mercy—have mercy on me, a miserable sinner: Pray for me—O pray for me, Vivax.*” Thus he continued to manifest the tumult of his soul, by earnest cries for mercy, and by piteous lamentations, until the violence of the storm abated. The

wind at length sprung up from the west and a bright rainbow formed by the beams of the setting sun announced fair weather, and put an end to the fears and prayers of Contumax. After entreating Vivax with the most earnest importunity not to publish his weakness, and at any rate, not to inform any of his companions that he had prayed; they separated, and Vivax closed the business of the day in his closet, but Contumax, anxious to obtain relief from some unwelcome sensations, which had been excited by the conversation and the storm, made haste to join his companions, and by the potent influence of a flowing bowl obtained the relief desired. The Club rose at a late hour, Contumax, for certain reasons, was left by his comrades. He awoke the next day in a remote part of the town, stripped of his coat, his hat, his money and watch: nothing was left to comfort him unless it was the reflection, that he had not spent the preceding night at a prayer meeting. S.

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FOR THE VIRGINIA RELIGIOUS MAGAZINE.

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*True Riches, No. II.*

LYSANDER is a gentleman of figure and fashion. It was the aim of his pious mother to bring him up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, in the knowledge and practice of genuine religion. Her early instructions have never wholly lost their effect on the morals of Lysander: but they were in the main defeated by the licentious opinions and corrupting example of his father, who seemed to imagine himself created for no other purpose than to amass money and to gratify his appetites. Lysander was sent early to college but instead of improving his mind, he spent his time in idleness and dissipation. Furnished by his imprudent parent with large and frequent supplies of money, he rapidly acquired habits of expensive amusement and vicious indulgence. The

associates who crowded around him to share his pleasures flattered his vanity, and accelerated the progress of his depravity. About the age of seventeen he lost his father. This event made little impression on the mind of Lyfander, except as it rendered him the assured heir of a large fortune. His mother continued earnestly to admonish and advise him, but to no effect. He left college soon after the death of his father, without the acquisition of useful knowledge, or a taste for manly pursuits. Under pretence of travelling for improvement, he spent some years in a succession of vitiating company and amusements; where, though he escaped the more gross and destructive crimes of some of his intimates, his habits of prodigal expence were strengthened, and his sentiments of religion and true dignity of character almost entirely destroyed.

When Lyfander came to the possession of his estate he married a lady whose mind and manners were the exact counterpart of his own. Under a glittering display of youthful beauty and superficial accomplishments, she could not conceal from discerning eyes an understanding destitute of cultivation, a heart filled with pride and irreligion, subjected to irregular passions, and devoted to frivolous extravagant and dangerous pleasures. Woman was made to be the rational companion and friend of man, to refine his sentiments and manners by her delicacy, to check his wanderings by her gentle counsels, to double his joys by participation, to soothe his cares and diminish his sorrows with the tender sympathy of love; and, in a word, to advance with him, assisted and assisting, through this world of trial and imperfection to everlasting felicity. But the wife of Lyfander was the reverse of all this. She was ignorant, careless, vain, passionate, and selfish; fond of company and profusion, a stranger to the important duties and the sweet satisfactions of well regulated domestick life.

With such a partner Lyfander settled as the head of a family. Religion made no part either of his business or his happiness; though its awful truths now and then occurred to

torment his conscience and throw a temporary gloom over his schemes of pleasure. Nor did he seek or understand the delight of giving bread to the hungry, cloathing to the naked and consolation to the broken in heart; though he never failed to contribute largely to publick charities, as this afforded gratification to his vanity, and furnished him with a pretext for neglecting the more laborious and condescending offices of private benevolence. In his domestick arrangements the most unbounded luxury and splendour were exhibited. His house, his gardens; his equipage, and his table were in the most brilliant style of expensive fashion. He even bought a large library and a vast collection of costly paintings, purely for fashions sake, as he did not possess the smallest taste for the one or the other. And after all, nothing could preserve him from languor and low spirits but an incessant round of idle visits, the adulation of interested flatterers, and the active bustle of his ambition to outdo all his neighbours in fashionable parade and grandeur. Whatever happiness such a mind could enjoy in such a mode of living Lyfander did enjoy; and to many he was an object of envy. Were they wise who envied him?

But large as his possessions were, they could not very long admit of such lavish expenditure. Awakened somewhat suddenly from the enchantment of luxurious gaiety by the demands of numerous creditors, and the sneers of those pretended friends who had flattered his vanity and contributed to waste his estate, he found himself on the brink of ruin and threatened with all the miseries of a prison. From the partner of his folly he received no consolation. Indeed their mutual reproaches increased the distress which both were conscious they deserved to suffer.

What was now to be done? The habits of domestick luxury were too deeply fixed in the heart of Lyfander to be eradicated. Destitute of a relish for cheap and simple pleasures, he could not think of any considerable retrenchments in his expensive mode of living. But his circumstances were pressing.

He saw but one way to escape the impending storm, and this he resolved to pursue. He engaged in a very extensive and laborious line of business by which he hoped in some years to retrieve his fortune. In this occupation he discovered talents which had they been early and properly applied, might have rendered him useful, honourable, and happy. In the course of a few years Lyfander became free from his embarrassments; but they were years of toil and anxiety inexpressible. Nothing but the most unremitting diligence, at once increased and embittered by the frequent threats of his creditors, could give him the prospect of attaining his end. During this time he acquired a new set of habits, though without laying aside those which characterized him before. He became penurious in his dealings, rigorous and cruel to his dependants, unfeeling to the poor, and marked in all his conduct by those maxims of extortion and fraud which are too common in the world to be much spoken of or generally censured, though highly odious to a pious and benevolent mind. In short, he has united in himself two dispositions which, however incompatible first they may appear, do in fact frequently concur; I mean those of avarice and profusion.

Such is now the character of Lyfander. Though his fortune is again become affluent, he continues the toil of business with anxious days and often sleepless nights. This painful way of life is partly the effect of habit; and partly also of necessity, as he cannot think of laying aside any of those expensive though insipid indulgences which have so long destroyed his peace. He is at once a miser and a prodigal. His wealth gives him, of course, influence in his neighbourhood; but it is not that kind of influence which makes its possessor happy. Indeed it is sufficiently evident to an observant eye that he is far from contentment and tranquility. To the poor he is an object of dread and of reproach. His friends are merely nominal, and renounce him as soon as interest permits them to throw off the mask. He knows that his acquaint-

tances and visitants, whose society however he cannot persuade himself to forego, entertain for him no cordial esteem. And indeed there are moments of reflection when he feels that he cannot esteem himself, and that all the world cannot afford genuine happiness without an approving conscience and a smiling God.

Some time ago Lyfander heard a sermon from which I hoped he would derive important benefit. The text was, 'How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!' The subject arrested his attention; and while the preacher touched on the toil of acquiring riches and their insufficiency to happiness, and enlarged very impressively on the dangers to which they expose the soul, I observed the face of Lyfander covered alternately with regret, remorse, and terrour. As we left the place he told me, with tears in his eyes, that he felt the truth of all the preacher had said; but that he was so involved in worldly business, and so habituated to the pleasures of wealth, that he feared he should never enter into the kingdom of God. Indeed his serious impressions were very transient. His pernicious habits are evidently gaining strength every day; and his sensibility to the great truths and objects of religion has already approached very near to utter extinction.

Reader, contemplate this character seriously. Consider how poor is the present happiness and how dreadful the future doom of the man who layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God. Remember that they who will at all events be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.

The character of my other neighbour, to be given in the next number, will illustrate in a more full and pleasing manner what I mean by true riches.

ASPASIO.

*True Riches, No. III.*

EUPHRON was the child of pious parents. His father was a worthy and useful minister of the gospel; whose name is still precious to many in this vicinity, though it is long since he went to receive the reward of his labours. As he lived in humble circumstances, he had no fortunes to leave to his children. But he carefully trained them up in the fear of God, and in kindness to their fellow-creatures. He early and deeply impressed it on their minds that they were to make their way in the world by the blessing of God upon their honest industry; and habituated them to labour, temperance, and simple pleasures. Their education was plain but solid, and extended very little beyond a good acquaintance with their native language, and some of its best writers in religion, history, and polite literature.

Thus prepared, Euphron at a proper age set out in the world for himself. His openness of disposition and agreeable manners induced many to seek his acquaintance; but he admitted none to his intimacy and friendship until he had reason to be satisfied that they were the children of God, the faithful disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. These he accounted the excellent of the earth. Their conversation and example strengthened his virtuous resolutions, and armed him more and more against the seductions of sinful pleasure, and the fashions of a world at enmity with God. In the meanwhile he betook himself to labour for a livelihood; and since his observation of human life has become more enlarged I have often heard him bless God that his circumstances did not permit him to be idle, as he was thus kept out of the way of many a dangerous temptation. He set out with the principle that religion, pure and undefiled, was to be the primary business of his life. He considered it the great object of his creation to glorify God, to do good to mankind, and to prepare himself by the grace of God in Christ Jesus for a better

world. Feeling himself a stranger and a pilgrim in this transitory state, he set his best affection on things above ; esteeming whatever earthly pleasures he might enjoy only as refreshments and accommodations of his journey to his heavenly home.

Euphron soon found a painful vacancy in his heart, to be filled only by a gentle partner of that sex without which the felicity of paradise itself had been incomplete. Every man of prudence seeks for good sense and kind dispositions in the partner of his bosom ; and some believe riches to be an equally essential requisite. Euphron knew how to value the former ; nor did he despise the latter. But he resolved that no consideration should induce him to marry a woman destitute of piety. He besought God to direct him in this important affair ; and his prayers were answered. He was blessed with a companion, not wealthy indeed, nor splendidly beautiful in person, but endowed with every amiable disposition, of an understanding and education suited to his own, possessing much of the heavenly mind which was in Christ Jesus. Happy pair ! Though industry and economy were to be the governing principles of their humble establishment, they were consciously rich in minds adapted to their situation, in the love of each other, and in the favour of God their heavenly Father.

The dwelling of Euphron was characterized by a neat simplicity. Every article of its furniture was useful ; nothing was calculated to dazzle the eye only. His little farm, cultivated with his own hands, produced him the necessaries and a few of the conveniences of life ; and cheerfulness and contentment reigned around his fire-side. It was a house of prayer, and the blessing of God rested upon it. He was able also by degrees to procure a small but well chosen library. He read the best poets and historians in our language with much pleasure. But the knowledge of the holy scriptures was the principal object of his reading and meditation. Dr. Dod-

dridge was his favourite author ; and perhaps, as often happens, his attachment to his favourite was a little excessive. I have heard him say that no expositor so generally afforded him light and satisfaction on the scriptures as the pious, judicious and candid Dr. Doddridge ; and that were he to be deprived of all books in the world but two, Doddridge's rise and progress of religion in the soul should be the second of those two, Indeed he has read this excellent work so often that he has most of its matter fixed in his memory. I have met with few persons of more interesting conversation on the doctrines and duties of the gospel. They are the delight of his heart, the subject of his daily study. I ventured once to express my surprise that amidst the calls of daily labour for the support of his family he could find so much time for reading. He assured me that the whole secret consisted in his early taste for reading and thirst for useful knowledge. Every man, said Euphron, has some leisure from the toils of life, which he may employ, if he chooses, in the pursuit of knowledge. Indeed it behoves us all indispensably to make some leisure for obtaining a competent knowledge of the gospel of our salvation, and of the duties we are required to perform. But besides this sense of duty, I can no more live without food for my mind than without food for my body. And as I am always on the watch for leisure to read, I find many an hour for the purpose which I should otherwise waste in needless sleep, idle conversation, or some other way equally frivolous. I have often with pain heard some of my neighbours assert that they could spare no money for the purchase of books, nor time for reading, not even the Bible. Yet I see the same persons often laying out money for mere superfluities of dress and of furniture, and wasting many an hour in a manner worse than idle. Alas, they do not know the value of these simple pleasures, so easily acquired and so innocently enjoyed. They are not aware that, next to religion and the tenderness of kindred souls, nothing so effectually procures peace and contentment as the pleasures of the understanding and the fancy.

But there is scarcely any earthly pleasure which Euphron relishes so highly as that of administering to the wants of the needy, and wiping the tear from the eye of sorrow. I remember to have seen a very lively indignation displayed in his countenance on hearing a gentleman assert that since the laws had made provision for the poor, he saw no occasion left for the exercise of private charity. Euphron's ideas on this subject are very different. He is pleased with publick charities and legal provisions for the needy and the helpless; and ascribes them confidently to the spirit and influence of Christianity. But he loves still more to dispense that unostentatious beneficence for which no human laws can provide; to relieve those who suffer in silence, through a laudable reluctance to become a burden to the public; to alleviate by sympathy, consolation, and counsel, those distresses which are beyond the power of pecuniary relief; to maintain the rights of the widow and the orphan; to soothe the pains of sickness and to soften the bed of death with the precious promises of the gospel. He is accounted a father to the poor and to the children of affliction in his neighbourhood. He feels a sacred pleasure in going to the house of mourning, where his appearance is always hailed with gladness and gratitude. He finds his happiness in the happiness of others; and values the prayers and the blessings of those whom God enables him to relieve more than treasures of gold and silver. Indeed it is his constant maxim that those only understand the true value of money and talents of every kind who employ them in promoting the glory of God and the welfare of his creatures.

Much of Euphron's time and attention is taken up in the education of two or three fine children, whom he numbers amongst the greatest blessings God has given him. He feels no pain at the prospect of their entering the world with as little fortune as he did himself; but is only solicitous to give them an education similar to his own, of which he considers the religious and moral part far the most important. He observes

that the most useful, respectable and happy men are generally those who arise in the middle class of society ; whose success in life is to depend upon their own characters and exertions, and who have taste enough to add something of the pleasures of literature to the more essential peace and comfort which the gospel affords to the pious and upright. I have seldom seen a more interesting spectacle than that of Euphron instructing his children ; teaching them the fear of God and the faith of Jesus Christ, describing the serenity of regulated desires and a good conscience, pointing to the rich and eternal inheritance reserved in heaven for those who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, and silently but powerfully enforcing all his precepts by his own engaging and venerable example.

The reader will not suppose that Euphron is or ever will be very rich in the common acceptation of the word. Indeed his estate has advanced but slowly. He once refused to engage in a very lucrative business which was offered him, because it would leave him no time for reading and his beloved offices of charity ; but especially because he saw it would expose him to numerous and dangerous temptations. He could not comprehend the consistency (canst thou, reader?) of praying not to be led into temptation, and yet going deeply into it with one's eyes open for the sake of amassing useless wealth. His uprightness in all his dealings and strict punctuality, in the performance of his promises have gained him a high character amongst his neighbours. Some of them, however, cannot understand why he so often neglects to get the best end of a bargain, as they call it, when he has it in his power. And those who make it a practice to gather money by whatever means they can, so as to escape the arm of the civil laws, and justify it as being the way of the world, sometimes smile at the scrupulous integrity and preciseness of Euphron, and whisper their pretended suspicions that he cannot be quite right in his understanding. I have heard him say, however, that by the

the blessing of God on his early education he set out in life with a rooted abhorrence of every thing fraudulent and dishonest; and that by long habit of doing to others as he would have them do to him it has become so natural to him that he hardly knows what it is to feel a temptation to do otherwise. He once observed to me that he could pity the man who sins through temptations of great and immediate pleasure; but could scarcely mingle pity with his indignation against him who coolly and systematically sells his conscience and his soul for heaps of superfluous gold.

I lately paid a visit of condolence to a friend, who had suffered what we call a great misfortune. He had become surety, for a considerable amount, for a man whom he believed to be honest, but who became a bankrupt by neglecting his business, and plunging into the destructive vices of gaming and drunkenness. Much of the property of Euphron had been taken from him to satisfy this heavy demand, without any ground of expectation that he should ever be requited for the loss and inconvenience his benevolence had brought upon him. I found him seated amidst his family at the door of his dwelling, his face enlivened with its usual cheerfulness, and a volume of his beloved Doddridge in his hand. On mentioning the purpose of my visit, I expressed some surprise at seeing his unaltered tranquility. I shall not soon forget his reply. I thank you, my dear friend, said he, for your kind sympathy: but indeed I do not stand much in need of your condolence. As I have never greatly set my heart on worldly goods, I am by no means overwhelmed with grief at losing them. I suppose that my heavenly Father saw that I had acquired a dangerous quantity of wealth, and has in mercy taken most of it away. It might have been a snare to my soul; and I might not have made such an use of it as to be able to give a good account of my stewardship. In the mean time I have still strength to cultivate my little farm, and it will produce bread for me and mine. My books also are mostly left

to me; nor has my misfortune deprived me of one of those friends who were dear to my heart. But above all, I enjoy the smiles of my God and am enabled to trust in his promises. He will cause this and all other dispensations of his providence to work together for my good. Through my earthly pilgrimage he will guide me with his counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory. Yes, blessed be my God and Saviour, I know that these light afflictions which are but for a moment shall work out for me a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Here my friend was stopped by strong emotions and bursting tears; but they were tears of joy and emotions of Christian triumph. Had I not in some measure participated, I should probably have envied his feelings. He seemed to be already on the borders of heaven.

And now, patient reader, I will detain thee but a moment longer. Which dost thou think to be the richer and the happier man, Lyfander or Euphron? Which of the two wouldst thou rather be? If thou hast a son, which of these men dost thou wish him to imitate and to resemble? Consult thy reason; consult thy conscience: make a fair decision, and act accordingly.

ASPASIO.

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FOR THE VIRGINIA RELIGIOUS MAGAZINE.

A series of letters on the tendency of religion to promote the happiness of mankind in the present world.

PHILANDER TO POLITUS, LETTER VI.

SIR,

You are pleased to say, "you do not know how my arguments in proof of the happy tendency of a pious life can be answered; but that you are waiting with no little interest to see how I shall remove the difficulties which stand in my way." This I will now endeavour to do; and am glad you have presented them ready to my hand in their full magnitude.

V v

You ask in the first place, "Whether the life of a Christian is not represented in the gospel as a constant course of self-denial and mortification; in which we are to take up our cross, to crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts; yea to become crucified and dead to the world, and the world to us? And how is this consistent with the representations which have been made of the Christian's peace and felicity?" I answer, this is indeed the language and the genius of Christianity; and I would to God that professing Christians were more generally impressed with this truth than they are. The gospel however, when rightly understood, does not enjoin those rigorous penances and gloomy austerities which have frequently thrown a forbidding cloud over its lovely countenance. The God of love takes no delight simply in the sufferings of any of his creatures, much less of his dear children. But I will not insist farther on this partial answer to the difficulty, as needless austerity is far from being the prevailing error of Christians in the present day. It is to be considered that the very nature of piety is to make us dislike, yea abhor every forbidden pursuit, every guilty gratification of our appetites and passions: so that the conflict to which the gospel calls us appears much more dreadful to the carnal mind than it really is to the regenerated soul, animated by the love of God and the faith of Jesus Christ. Such a soul glories in being crucified to the world by the cross of Christ. He is heartily ashamed of those evil courses which were once his delight, and looks upon all the pleasures of sin with a generous disdain. He tastes a more exquisite pleasure in obtaining the victory over his own corruptions than the ambitious man in the conquest of nations—Under the influence of almighty grace his habits of piety and virtue are continually acquiring fresh accessions of strength and the toil of self-denial of his Christian course become more and more easy every day. While a giddy world wonders that he runs not with them to the same excess of riot, he pities their folly; sees the amazing sacrifices, temporal as well as eternal, which they make in the pur-

suit of mistaken happiness; and blesses God that whereas he was formerly blinded by the same infatuation, he has now found a source of pure and satisfying joy in communion with God, and with his people the excellent of the earth—I will not to multiply unnecessary words. I acknowledge that, thro' the remaining imperfections of the best of men, the Christian race, the heavenly warfare, is frequently arduous and painful; I will only farther request you seriously to re-consider the views and comparisons I have presented to you at large in my former letters.—They will be sufficient, I think, to convince you that this difficulty, with all its formidable appearance, does not overthrow the position I have undertaken to defend.

But “does not the Apostle Paul say, if in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most miserable?” He does say so; and his words have often been quoted with the same view that you quote them now. But I am persuaded they have been much misunderstood, from want of attention to the context. Be pleased to turn to the passage: it is in I. Cor. 15. The Apostle is discoursing of the resurrection of the dead, which some amongst the Corinthians had denied. Thus he argues; if there be no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain; yea, and we are found false witnesses of God: because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ. After a solemn repetition of these dreadful consequences, he concludes with the assertion in question; the evident purport of which is this: “we Apostles have forsaken and sacrificed our ease, our fortunes, our reputation, all that was valuable to us in the world, and even life itself, for the sake of our testimony to the resurrection of Christ. If he be not raised, we have subjected ourselves to all these sufferings for the purpose of propagating an impious imposture of which we are conscious, and for which we are provoking a righteous God to punish us forever in the world to come. So that with a conscience accusing us of the highest

wickedness we are madly casting away all happiness present and future, and must be of all men the most miserable."—This appears to me the plain account of the passage under consideration. And it would be no wonder if men engaged in such a cause, at such an expence of every thing dear to the human heart, and with such a consciousness and fearful prospects, should feel themselves of all men the most perfectly miserable. By the way I cannot help remarking the glaring and absolute impossibility of accounting for the conduct of these witnesses on any other principle than that they testified what they knew to be true; and I have no doubt this was the very object of the Apostle's making the assertion. And now you readily perceive that all this has nothing to do with the happy tendency of piety, which consists in dispositions the very contrary to all insincerity and imposture. But whether you will admit my interpretation of this text or not, you will remember that I have not maintained the supreme happiness of such a piety as is without the hope of a blessed immortality in the perfect enjoyment of God. This very hope, given to the humble believer through the Lord Jesus Christ, is one of the most precious ingredients of his happiness here below. It is in some measure, an anticipation of heavenly glory; and as an anchor to the soul, sure and steadfast, bears him up under all his trials, and animates him with divine energy to all the arduous labours of the Christian life. In every point of view, therefore, the objection is easily removed.

You ask me next, "how I can reconcile to my doctrine the various persecutions which the gospel teaches Christians to expect; and especially the case of martyrdom for religion, which has frequently taken place, and which may again take place for ought we can foresee?" Here let me answer the difficulty concerning martyrdom first. Though many have gloriously laid down their lives in tortures for the sake of Christ and a good conscience; yet, comparatively speaking, but few Christians have been called to this highest trial of their faith and patience.

Martyrs for the gospel have hitherto, on the whole, only formed an exception to a general rule. It must also be remembered that (if I may be allowed to use the term in such a connexion,) sin has its martyrs too, and as many at least as religion. Consider for a moment what vast numbers of the children of men are brought to untimely and often excruciating ends by drunkenness, by lewdness, by the thirst of revenge, by a regard to false honours, and other destructive vices! Farther; Christians have the promise of God that as the day of their trial is, so shall their strength be: and they have found it made good to them in the most trying times. Christian martyrs have generally gone to tortures and death not merely with firmness, but with a certain sacred cheerfulness, of which, as we are not called to the same proof of our attachment to our Saviour, we can probably form no adequate conception. This wonderful trait in the glorious sufferings of the early martyrs of Christianity, the great Mr. Addison considered as necessarily to be accounted for by a miraculous interposition from Heaven for their support; and urged it strongly as a direct and decisive proof of the truth of the gospel. Who can tell how far the sense of pain may be overborne to the holy sufferer, when, like the blessed Stephen, he beholds heaven opened, and Jesus Christ standing ready to receive him, at the right hand of God? But perhaps the safest answer to the difficulty concerning martyrdom is that which I have hinted at already, that it is only a particular and occasional exception to a general fact; and therefore has not force to disprove the doctrine I have advocated. In our highly-favoured country where we enjoy the most perfect liberty of conscience, accountable to God alone, it is evident there remains no place for this objection to a life of Christian piety. As to the other part of what you have stated under this head, it is true that the children of God are always to calculate on meeting with opposition and persecution in some shape and degree or other from an ungodly world. It is the declaration of our Master, in the world ye shall have tribulation; and

the prophecy has never failed of its accomplishment that whosoever will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. It is a part of that course of trial and warfare allotted to the saints in this world, who are, after the example of their Redeemer, to be made perfect through sufferings. But if this be considered an objection to my doctrine, I cannot but think it will be easily answered by the various considerations advanced in my former letters, to which I beg leave to refer you, if it be necessary to your satisfaction. I only add that the gospel requires no man to seek and court persecution, as some have ignorantly and absurdly done; and that when Christians meet with it in the way of their duty, they do in fact find themselves sweetly comforted in all their tribulation, and as the sufferings of Christ abound in them, so their consolation by Christ does also still more abound.

Finally, you ask me, "whether it be not a fact that Christians are generally an unsocial melancholy class of people, destitute of a taste for all the elegant and exquisite pleasures of life?" I acknowledge there have been, and there are at this day, some mistaken Christians who think it their duty to make piety wear this gloomy and terrifying appearance. I am sorry for it. But the fact is not generally so. Alas, we too commonly err as I said before in the other extreme of idle levity and criminal conformity to the world. However, I beg you not to be misled by hasty and partial observation, but to look attentively on the behaviour of the body of intelligent and sober Christians, and to consider the reason of the thing. Christians are often deemed unsocial because they dare not follow the multitude to do evil, but feel it their indispensable duty to come out from amongst the wicked, and be separate in their maxims, their pursuits and their enjoyments. But a truly pious man cannot be destitute of social principles. The very essence of the gospel is that spirit of fervent and generous love which unites the children of God in indissoluble bonds to him and to each other. We naturally love to

associate with those whose sentiments and conduct are like our own. And true Christians are to each other the dearest and most valuable society in the world. Behold, said the ancient Heathen, how these Christians love one another! And they are willing to please all men for their good to edification; and to associate with the world when duty calls, and when they can do it with safety to their religious manners and interests. Christians are supposed to be characteristically melancholy, because they dislike the frivolous and dangerous levity of a world forgetful of God and immersed in wickedness. Religion teaches her votary a dignified cheerfulness, a holy serenity of soul, which though it make less noise and show, is infinitely more precious than all the empty laughter and presumptuous gaiety of the enemies of God. I acknowledge, however, that the pious have sorrows and griefs of their own: not arising from their piety, but from the conscious imperfection of it. And even in those tears of humble confession and penitence there is a sweetness not to be exchanged for all the deceitful vivacity and joy of those who have no friend in heaven. Experience is the best teacher in things like these; and it abundantly confirms what is here asserted. Surely if there be such a thing on earth as rational tranquility and settled contentment of soul, the pious man alone has a true right to it: and all who aim at it without resorting to the favour of a reconciled God are guilty of a daring usurpation, the effects of which, however flattering they may appear, must speedily pass away forever. As to what you mention of taste for elegant and refined pleasures, I believe that Christians have quite as much taste for all kinds of manly and innocent gratifications as their neighbours in similar situations of life. The wide fields of nature and art are as open to them as to others. And they are not the less disposed to enjoy the rich bounties of their God because they value his favour infinitely more than all that the world calls good and great. If they abstain from those vain parades and hurtful amusements which engross the attention of the fashionable world,

it is because the grace of God has rectified their taste, and directed it to objects and pleasures infinitely more worthy of a rational and immortal mind. Did men of the world know how religion sooths our sorrows, how it exalts our pleasures, and what inexpressible pleasures it has which are entirely and peculiarly its own, they would cease to revile it as a melancholy bondage, a burden too heavy to be borne. They would acknowledge that the service of God is the most perfect freedom, and that in the keeping of his commandments there is, even now a great reward. They would exclaim with the celebrated Montesquieu, speaking of Christianity; "how admirable the religion which, while it seems only to have in view the felicity of the other life, constitutes the happiness of this!"

After all should this whole investigation be nothing more than a mistaken theory, I beseech you to remember that the advantage, the absolute necessity of religion in regard to our eternal welfare remains unquestioned. In this view its value is beyond all expression and even all conception. That you may earnestly seek this pearl of great price, and find it to your exceeding great and everlasting joy, shall be the constant prayer of your sincerely affectionate, &c.

PHILANDER.



FOR THE VIRGINIA RELIGIOUS MAGAZINE.

LETTER TO THE REV. MR. ———

REV. SIR,

WHEN I was at your house several years ago, you showed me *M' Laurin's sermons and Essays*, of which you spoke in terms of high commendation. After looking into the book a few minutes I laid it aside, not thinking it would afford me sufficient entertainment to compensate the trouble of a perusal. At this blunder I now feel equally amazed and mortified, having just read the collection with inexpressible pleasure. I ought indeed to have given it more attention than I did, on

account of your recommendation : but I am really at a loss to conceive how its uniform and exquisite excellence could escape me, even on a momentary inspection. Every page beams with a bright effulgence of very uncommon intellectual powers and fervent piety. The author is a zealous advocate for genuine experimental religion, which he delineates in its several branches with a masterly hand. These he distinguishes clearly from all counterfeits, defends against all objections with invincible force of argument. The glorious grace of the gospel, and the Holy Spirit's almighty agency in the conversion and sanctification of the soul, are luminously exhibited and established. Especially, the precious doctrine of *redemption by the cross Christ* is displayed and vindicated in the most impressive manner; and the author makes it (as every Christian should,) the grand central point of all his views of religion doctrinal and practical. In a word, this comprehensive little volume appears to me to be one of the richest treasures of divine knowledge that I have ever seen. I am surprised that it has had so little circulation in this country: the copy which lies before me is the only one, except yours, that I have met with. I wish we could have an American edition of it, and that it were universally read. I often hear people say they cannot spare money for the purchase of religious books. But *the Bible, M'Laurin's sermons and Essays, and Doddridge's Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul*, might be purchased for *three dollars*: and don't you think these alone would form an excellent little Christian library?
am &c.

~~~~~ PHILANDER.

*Extract from a charge on Patriotism, delivered by the Hon. JACOB RUSH, President of the Third District, of the Court of Common Pleas and Quarter Sessions for the State of Pennsylvania.*

"It cannot then be denied, that the public prosperity of our land, depends upon the virtue of the people, and that the

practice of vice, like a cancer in the natural body, will at last extend itself to the vitals of the country, and cut off our national existence. If this be the case, we may safely assert, that no man loves his country, who lives in the habitual violation of any rule in her moral code; because by so doing he contributes his aid to accomplish her destruction. He may call himself a federalist, or an antifederalist—a republican, or a democrat—or whatever else he pleases; it is certain, he is but a pretender to the character of a patriot. It is impossible *he* can love his country, whose life and actions are hostile to her true interests. Party and personal prejudices he may possess in abundance, which to the world, and perhaps to himself, he may cover with the mantle of zeal for the public good. But the love of his country is a stranger to his heart. Examine for a moment, Gentlemen, the force of this observation, by your own experience in private life. Suppose one of your neighbours, to profess a regard and affection for you, and at the same time to make a practice of thwarting your views, and *defeating* the plans you had laid to promote your happiness or your interest. There is no doubt you would despise his professions, and call him a hypocrite. Nor can *he* be pronounced any thing better, who tells you he loves his country, and is at the same time habitually infringing those laws on which her salvation and prosperity essentially depend. Away with such patriotism! It is “Hail Master!” with the lips, and at the same instant a stab to the heart. I call *that* man a disorganizer, let his political principles be what they may, who is spreading thro’ the moral world, the seeds of disorder and vice, and thereby sapping the foundation of *all* government. Our country may well expostulate with the immoral man in language used of old time “If you love me, you will keep my commandments—Ye are my friends, if ye do whatever I command you.” In short, Gentlemen, as in Christianity, so it is in patriotism—Obedience is the unerring criterion, the sole decisive mark of affection. If you really love your country, you will observe her laws, and her statutes, which are framed to promote and to

perpetuate her welfare, believe and forgive me—a gambling, lying, drunken, or swearing patriot, is as great a contradiction, as a whoring, swearing, or drunken Christian; though in the practical estimation of the two characters, mankind have made a wide difference. The hypocritical pretensions of the patriot are too often successfully played off, while those of the pretended Christian are sure to exclude *him* from the character. When we urge the necessity of supporting government by means of religion, something more is expected than a cold assent to its principles and its doctrines.

Heu. *Virtus laudatur et alget.*\*

If the public institutions, established for the purpose of impressing the precepts of religion, are deserted and neglected, it is the height of folly to expect government will derive advantage from any system of religion whatever, it being evidently impossible there should be such a thing as religion in the world without *some* forms of public worship, and the solemn acknowledgment of the Deity and his controlling providence, in our social capacity.

“What shall we say then of those persons who, by their language, or their example, discourage the religious institutions of our country? It is impossible to rank *them* in the class of patriots, or friends to social order. As to those who openly go about to abolish *all* religion, there can be no doubt the tendency, if not the very *object* of *their* labours, is universal anarchy and misery—In neglecting its institutions, *they* act therefore perfectly in character. But the well-wishers of government among us, are in this respect peculiarly reprehensible. Like false and inadequate props, they overturn the very building they mean to support. They weakly attempt to accomplish the end, without making use of the requisite means, and act a part altogether inconsistent and irrational.

“It is readily acknowledged, that immoral men often render essential service to their country. Some of the most worth-

\* *Probitas—Juvenal.*

less and profligate of the human race, have been the honoured instruments in the hands of Providence of procuring the greatest national blessings. Henry the Eighth, and the Duke of Marlborough, contributed eminently by their actions to the glory and preservation of the English nation; but nobody ever supposed they were influenced by a love of their country. Caprice, promotion, or the whistling of a name, have given birth to the greatest achievements recorded in history. What would you think of a man who, in the very act of conferring a favour on an acquaintance, should inflict the most deadly wounds on his person?—Would you believe he had any affection for your murdered friend?—You certainly would not. Just so much true patriotism has that man, who by his vices, is daily diffusing through society the most malignant poison, and at the same time, from pride or some other motive, perfectly compatible with a heart dead to every sentiment of public virtue; is *occasionally* performing an act that redounds to his country's welfare.

The true notion of patriotism, is, a principle of obedience to the laws of God, and of our country, manifesting itself in the discharge of our religious, moral, and social duties.—This is substantial patriotism, within the reach of every man, high and low, rich and poor, and that does not evaporate in empty noise about the Rights of Man, or the Virtue of Federalism. It is the sort of patriotism we stand in need of at this critical juncture. A country over-run with moral disorders, cannot be long exempt from political proxims of convulsive and fatal tendency. Groundless and futile are the apprehensions entertained by some persons to the cause of liberty from our rulers, who deriving their existence from popular election, the instant their oppressive hand is felt by the people, that instant they will remove it, with the same facility that the "Lion shakes the dew-drops from his mane. The only real source of danger, arises from the conduct of the *people themselves*, and from the alarming progress of infidelity, and the decay of morals among us. It is a truth established on uniform experience,

that where the manners of the people are repugnant to the execution of a law, the arm of legislative power has been found too feeble to enforce it. In support of this observation, I may appeal to the detestable practice of common swearing, which keeps its ground in opposition to the laws of the land, and to every principle of religion, decency, and morality. Read over, if you please, the act of Pennsylvania, for the suppression of vice and immorality; and it is an hundred to one, but the first company afterwards you enter, especially if it be in a tavern, will extort the melancholy reflection, that the laws of the land are a perfect satire on the morals of the people. Vain, and worse than vain, are laws for the preservation of government, if the people are too debauched and corrupt to execute them. If we are in earnest in our wishes to save our country, we must therefore begin by a reformation of her morals. We must make good the tree, if we expect good fruit from it. In a representative government, no truth can be more important or self-evident than this. Let us then, Gentlemen, in our several stations, encourage virtue, and discourage vice in others. In an especial manner, persons of authority and influence, should promote the cause of good morals. Every individual should discharge his duty, as a part of the grand community, with a view to the production of the public good, and general happiness.

“ Above all things, Gentlemen, the principles of Christianity should be cherished, and its religious institutions be encouraged by every man who wishes well to his country. A government like ours, floating on the precarious tide of public opinion, can be held *securely* by nothing else but the principles of religion; and if it be once driven from this anchor, by the storms of irreligion and licentiousness, it will quickly be overwhelmed by the waves of popular fury and violence.— Well might the great Montesquieu, speaking of Christianity, and the transcending excellence of its moral code, exclaim with rapture, “ How admirable is that religion, which, while it seems only to have in view the felicity of the *other* world

constitutes the happiness of *this!*" The precepts of this religion, which teach us to be diligent in our several stations—to govern our passions—to be obedient to our superiors and rulers—to do good to all men, and whose very essence is peace and good will to men—the precepts of this religion, *reduced to practice*, would soon change the face of our affairs. Our country would become a band of patriots—order would arise from a state of confusion; harmony take place of discord, and the blessings of a mild and peaceful government be diffused through every part of our nation and land.

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FOR THE VIRGINIA RELIGIOUS MAGAZINE.

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Extract of a Funeral sermon, preached on occasion of the death of William Craghead Esq. of Lunenburg Virginia, by the Rev. ARCHIBALD M'ROBERT.

"WITH respect to our deceased friend, I know that I may say without offence, that there was a time when he walked as other men, in the vanity of his mind. But of the evil and danger of this it pleased God to make him deeply sensible; the circumstances attending which he himself acquainted me with: He had then strong and distressing convictions of his lost and ruined state by nature and sin, and of the impossibility of being saved by any works of righteousness which he could do. It was in the very bloom of life and youthful vigor, that the Lord was pleased to deal with him in this manner, and to call him by his grace, and divorce him from sin, self, and the world. He went mourning for a considerable time, bowed down under the painful sense of guilt and unbelief, harrassed, at the same time, with the dreadful buffetings of satan, and fought the Lord sorrowing night and day. It was during these agonizing struggles, that the Lord was pleased to inter-

pose, to rebuke satan, and dispel the cloud, and give him a view of the great salvation he had provided, and the all sufficiency and willingness of the Lord Jesus Christ, to save to the uttermost. The scheme appeared so glorious and transporting that it filled all his laboring anxious soul with wonder, love, and praise. And the Lord at the same time, shewed him great mercy, for He enabled him to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. He gave him power to trust the word of promise, viz. 'He that believeth in the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved,' and to rest on God's truth and faithfulness to fulfil it to his soul. And, in thus believing, he found great peace with God through the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, and was moved and enabled to make a most solemn and unreserved surrender of himself to God, and to enter into covenant with him in the most solemn and deliberate manner, and that with fasting and prayer, and under his hand and seal. In this transaction, as he very justly observed, he only rendered unto God his own. In this solemn manner did he avouch the Lord to be *his* God—Jesus Christ to be his Lord and only Saviour—the Spirit of God to be his leader, guide, and sanctifier—the holy scriptures to be the man of his counsel, and God's people to be his people henceforward. And he had abundant experience of God's truth and faithfulness, through a long series of years after this, in preserving upon his mind a *lively* sense of this solemn transaction and engagement to be the Lord's or "for God and not another," as he expressed it. The longer he lived, the more devoted he was to God, and the more warmly engaged in his service. These are things which I had frequent opportunities of knowing and observing, for more than thirty years; and must now say, that he was one of the most steady, and uniform professors of the name of Christ that I ever knew, both at home and abroad, and in all places and circumstances. His uniform and undaunted opposition to vice, profaneness, and immorality, as might be expected, sometimes exposed him to the contradic-

tion of sinners; but this he was enabled to bear with great patience and fortitude. His endeavors to do good, to introduce conversation on the subject of religion, and to suggest motives to seek and serve the Lord were unwearied, wherever he went: especially in visiting the sick and the afflicted, and in praying with and for them. And there is great reason to believe, that these endeavors were frequently owned and blest. One person in particular, whose funeral I attended near thirty years ago, did believe and profess, that he owed his conversion, under God, to his instructions and prayers. He died in peace, professing assurance of his interest in Christ; and, at his particular desire, I preached at his funeral from these words, chosen by himself on his dying bed, Psal, xxxiv. 6. "This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him; and saved him out of all his troubles." In our friend's conduct there was a striking proof too, that Christ diffuses a patriot spirit; for, in the most perilous juncture that Virginia had then known, he voluntarily jeopardied his life in her service; and his example had a happy influence on many others. He bore an office among the Rangers, after Bradock's defeat, with much acceptance to his fellow soldiers, and credit to himself. After this, he sustained the office of ruling elder during great part of the time of the eminent Mr. Davies's pastoral charge of the presbyterian church in Hanover, with great dignity and fidelity, and was highly acceptable among the people. And, after Mr. Davies's removal to Princeton he was peculiarly active in procuring supplies, and in preserving the unity of the church in that place, for a number of years. And, when preaching could not be had at their own meeting, he made no difficulty of travelling twenty, sometimes thirty miles to attend the instituted means of grace, and that frequently too. And this example was very influential with many who, I humbly hope, are long since gone to heaven, and with them I trust, he now enjoys sweet and uninterrupted fellowship. He might be mistaken, sometimes, in his judgment of men and things, for the human mind is very limited in its

capacity; but he was strictly conscientious in the discharge of every trust reposed in him, as well civil as sacred. I need hardly mention his unceasing endeavors to have, and encourage preaching in this vicinity (De Graffenreidt's meeting in Lunenburg;) it cannot be forgot; nor the pleasure he took in seeing public worship attended upon: it was the joy and rejoicing of his soul. And that he was no bigot, was very evident, from his care to lay hold of all opportunities for public worship, and the sweet harmony in which he lived with other denominations—with all, I may say, who appeared to love the Lord Jesus in sincerity. Thus our friend happily laid up in store a good foundation against the time to come. For that death has no sting to such as have lived by faith on the Son of God, he had happy experience. With the tenderest love, our dear Lord appoints the time, the place, and all the circumstances of his people's dying. When He lays them on the bed of languishing, He gives them the consolations of his grace, and lets them know that he will keep that good thing which they have committed to Him. And this produces sweet resignation to his will, and calls forth the delightful exercise of patience and submission to his sovereign appointments with respect to their dear connections, as well as themselves. And this was remarkably conspicuous in our friend, from the manner in which he bore the loss of a dear, amiable, pious companion who, it is believed, went to glory about eight weeks before him, and with whom, he is now united to part no more. It was the Lord's doing he observed, and he perfectly acquiesced in it. And while the outward man decays the Lord continues his grace to the inward man: *his* strength is then, indeed, perfected in the weakness of his people, then the divine life in the soul flourishes amidst losses and bereavements, and the evident decay of this mortal frame. This was strikingly visible, in the whole conversation and carriage of our friend in his last sickness. Faith by the almighty operation of the Spirit of God, continued to work resignation, peace and composure in his dying breast; and ceased not, until it

had done its last kind office.—Such was the happy experience of our departed friend. He had *continued* sweet experience of the goodness and love of God in Christ Jesus, and was persuaded that his soul was bound in the bundle of life with the Lord his God. To the last, his faith, his resignation, his comforts failed him not. A gracious God was pleased to remove every thing far from him, which could render death in the least dreadful. He had not a doubt concerning his interest in the Lord Jesus Christ, and his title to that glory, honor, and immortality, for which he had been so long waiting, by a patient continuance in doing, and submitting to the will of God, and so fell asleep in Jesus.

“ In him the church sustains the loss of a lively active member, and society of a most valuable, pious, and patriotic citizen. But on a dear bereaved family, the loss falls heaviest of all. May the Father of Mercies, and God of consolation teach you a becoming resignation, support you under, and dispose and enable you to make the right improvement of the great loss you have sustained. This providence calls you, in a most emphatic manner, to cast your burdens upon the God of your father. May you all be divinely determined, and enabled to do it, to his glory and your own comfort. Never forget, never lose sight my dear children, of the example which, by the grace of God, he set you; and his anxious and affectionate concern to bring you up in the nurture and fear of the Lord, and as candidates for a glorious and a happy immortality. While he was yet with you, he was a burning and shining light to guide your way; but it is the will of God, that that light should now cease to shine as heretofore. It is, therefore, now peculiarly incumbent on you, if you have not formally done it already, to make choice of your father's God for your God and portion; and solemnly to devote yourselves to him, as ever you expect to die the death of the righteous, and that your last end may be like his. Thus will you best honor your pious father's memory, and lay in a good foundation of hope

for yourselves. And be assured that the Lord, even the God of your father, will receive you graciously, and be a God and father to you. You have his promise, which cannot fail, for your encouragement. Suffer me, dear children, as one deeply interested in your credit and immortal welfare—as the hoary servant of Jesus Christ, and the friend of your venerable father, to leave with you the advice of a dying father to his son. 1 Chron. xxviii. 9. “And thou Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind: if thou seek him He will be found of thee; but if thou neglect him, he will cast thee off for ever.” May this fatherly admonition have its proper weight with you! and see that ye sorrow not as those who have no hope; for, “if we believe that Jesus died, and rose again even so them also which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him.” 1 Theff. iv. 14.

“I have been thus explicit on the present occasion, my brethren, not to exalt men, but God—not for the honor of the deceased, for he needed, and, I know, he sought it not. I know that he was perfectly contented to go through evil as well as good report here, and happy in relying on that word of the Lord, 1 Sam. ii. 30. “Them that honor me, I will honor.” I have been led to speak thus largely, in order to exalt the free grace of God, and for our benefit who are left behind that seeing and hearing how that grace has abounded to others, and its glorious and happy effect upon their souls in living and dying, we might be all stirred up to long unceasingly for it, and to press unweariedly after the experimental knowledge of it. Then “for us to live will be Christ, and to die gain”: or, in other words, Christ, in the liberal communication of his grace to our souls, will be our sure support, our comfort and our gain, living and dying, &c.

From the Rev. THOMAS STACKHOUSE's 'History of the Holy Bible.' Glasgow edition—1796.—As this work is not in very general circulation, we hope the following extract will be acceptable to the readers of this Magazine.

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 AUGUSTUS (for so we must now call him) having raised himself to this height of power and glory, as soon as Lepidus, who had been pontifex maximus, or high priest of Rome, was dead, assumed to himself (as did his successors in the empire) that office; and the first thing he did, was to examine into the prophetic books, which at that time went abroad under the name of the *Sibyls*.\*

In the reign of Tarquinius Superbus, there came a strange woman to Rome, who offered to sell to the king nine volumes

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 • The Sibyls were women of ancient times said to be endued with a prophetic spirit, and to have delivered oracles, foreshewing the fates and destinies of kingdoms: We have, in the writings of the ancients, mention made of ten of them: The Cumæan, the Cumanian, the Persian, the Hellepontican, the Lybian, the Samian, the Delphian, the Phrygian, the Tiburtine, and the Erythræan: But some are of opinion, that the Cumæan and the Erythræan was one and the same Sibyl; that she was born at Erythrae in Ionia, and therefore was by the Greeks called Erythrae; but, having removed from Erythrae to Cumæ in Italy, and there delivered all her oracles, she was from thence, by the Romans, and Italians, called *Cumæa*. These Sibylis, among the Pagans, were what the prophets and prophetesses were accounted among the Hebrews; and, as the most ancient of these were named *Sibylla*, so all others of the same sex, who pretended to the like fatidical spirit, were called *Sibyls*. The place from whence these Sibyls gave out their oracles, was generally a cave, or subterraneous vault, if we may judge of others by that at Cumæ, whereof Justin Martyr gives us this account. 'I have seen the place,' says he, 'which is a large chapel, or oratory, hewn out of the main rock, and must have been a work of great labour. Here the Sibyl (as the inhabitants, who had a tradition thereof, told me) gave forth oracles. In the middle of the chapel, they shewed me three hollow places, hewn out of the same rock, in which, when filled with water, the Sibyl used to bathe

of these Sibylline oracles, but, upon his refusing to purchase them, burnt three of them, and afterwards coming with six, and being rejected, burnt three more, and yet, at last, obtaining the full price of what she had asked at first, for the three remaining: That these volumes when purchased, were laid up in the capitol, committed to the custody of proper officers, never consulted but upon great exigencies of state, and carefully preserved, until at the burning of the Capitol, in the civil wars between Sylla and Marius, they happened to be consumed: That, upon rebuilding of the Capitol, the Romans, with great care made another collection of Sibylline oracles from several countries, and, after they had selected such as their church and state did approve of for their purpose, laid them up in the new Capitol, instead of those which the fire had consumed; that, besides those Capitoline volumes, there were a great many more Sibylline oracles in the world, which Augustus, in the beginning of his office of pontifex maximus, endeavoured to collect, and what he reputed genuine, or rather what suited his purpose best, these he deposited likewise in the Capitol, burning the rest: That Tiberius made another review of these oracles, and condemned several volumes of them to the flames; but the Capitoline copies were still held in great veneration, until they fell into disgrace in the reign of Honorius, and, by his order and appointment, were burnt and destroyed; these are facts that are confirmed by all antiquity, and what comprise indeed the whole history of these Sibylline writings. But if they were all thus finally destroyed, the question is, how came we by the present collection of Greek verses, comprised in eight books, which go

herself, and so, having put on her garment retired into the innermost cell of the chapel, (which was likewise hewn out of the same rock,) and, having placed herself upon an elevated seat, which jutted out into the middle of the cell, she there uttered her oracles; *Lactantius, De falsa religione, lib. 1. c. 6. ; Salmasius in exercitat. ad Solinum, p. 8. ; et J. Martyr, Cohortatio ad Græcos.*

under the name of *Sibyls*, and of what merit and authority are we to account them?

Now, in answer to this, it is to be observed, that long before the times of Christianity, there were extant, among the Heathens, several oracles, or predictions of future events, ascribed to one or more of these prophetesses, who were stiled *Sibyls*; that these predictions were held in great esteem among the ancients, as containing notions consonant to true religion, the worship of one God, the conflagration of the world, the renovation of it again, the general resurrection, and the rewards and punishments hereafter; and that both Heathen, Jewish, and Christian authors, who make mention of these Sybils give a strong sanction to their authority. Varro looks upon them as inspired prophetesses; Virgil does them honor in citing their predictions; Josephus thinks them useful to establish some positions in sacred history, and Clemens Alexandrinus (as he quotes a more ancient author for it) brings in St. Paul addressing himself to an Heathen audience in these words: 'Take the Greek books in your hands, read the Sibyls, and see what they say of the unity of God, and how they foretel what is to come, and you will there clearly find the Son of God.' It must be acknowledged indeed, that the whole collection of the Sibylline oracles, as they are now extant, in eight entire books, are far from being genuine. The 1st, 2d, and most of the 5th, all the 6th, 7th, and 8th books, seem to be a manifest forgery, the spurious production of some zealous Christian, (perhaps about the middle of the second age after Christ,) for the promotion of the religion he professed.

In one place he explicitly declares himself to be a Christian, and speaks of the whole mystery of our salvation, and of the methods whereby it was accomplished; of the incarnation and birth, the circumcision and death, the resurrection and ascension of our Saviour Christ, with as much accuracy as do the evangelists. In another place, he mentions Christ's future reigning here upon earth, according to the notion of the

millenarians, which was not started till the second century ; and in another, gives us a succession of the Roman emperors, in their order from Julius Cæsar to Antonius Pius, together with the adoption of Marcus Aurelius, and Lucius Verus, which has much more the air of an historical narrative, than a prophetic prediction.

These things discover a forgery, at least a great part of these pretended oracles, a little too palpably ; but then, it must be observed, that neither the Heathens before, nor the Christians, for the three first centuries after Christ, knew any thing of these spurious pieces, because we no where find them making any citations from them ; but now from the whole proem, the greatest part of the third, all the fourth, and a small branch of the fifth book, (which are the only parts of the present collection, that are either recited or referred to by the ancient Heathens,) their quotations are innumerable : And therefore we may justly infer, that the present copy of eight books is not the same with what was extant before, and in the first ages of Christianity, but widely different from it ; that those are the genuine prophecies only, which we find the ancient Heathens, and primitive Christians, so frequently citing, and so generally esteeming, upon the account of their divine inspiration ; and that the rest which have visible marks of forgery upon them, were probably the spurious additions of such conceited Christians as called themselves *Gnostics* ; because Epiphanius tells us, that this set of men boasted of having books, written by the daughter of Noah, even as the pretended prophets, at the end of the third book, (which is a spurious edition to what went before,) gives us to know, that she was a wife to one of the three sons of Noah, and was with him in the ark during the whole time of the deluge.

Upon the whole, therefore, we may conclude, that though, in the collection, which we now have of the Sibylline prophecies, several whole books, and some parts in others, are confessedly spurious, yet others there are, which have all the evidences we can desire, of their being genuine : and therefore

to condemn them all in the lump, and, because some appear to be palpable forgeries, to include all under the same category, is an act of great injustice.

If indeed we attend never so little to the contents of those oracles, which we deem genuine, we cannot but perceive, that neither Heathens, Jews, or Christians, could consistently with themselves, be any ways the forgers of them. The Heathens could not, because they are directly levelled against their wickedness, idolatry, and Polytheism. The Jews could not, because they foretel the subversion of their state and temple by the Romans, which we all know they would never believe: And the Christians could not, because many quotations, out of these oracles, are found in other authors previous to Christianity; and in the beginning of it, several of them are cited by the first Christians in the open view of all men, as very ancient at that time, very well known, and universally received over all the Heathen world.

If then these genuine prophecies of the Sibyls were not of human contrivance and invention, the conclusive question is, From whence was it that they derived their original? God, no doubt, who forced Balaam, contrary to his will, to bless the Israelites, and to prophecy *the coming of his Son out of Jacob*, could in what manner he pleased, controul the diabolical spirits, which presided in the Heathen oracles, and make them utter things, even relating to the kingdom of the Messiah, which otherwise they might have no inclination to utter. But there is no necessity for our having recourse to this extraordinary expedient; since the contents of the Sibylline oracles (those I mean that are genuine) are every where agreeable to the scriptures, and foretel, for the main part, the same great revolutions of providence, that they do; it is no way inconsistent with the divine attributes to suppose, that, tho' God gave positive laws, or an institution of religious worship to the Jews only, and intrusted none but them with those divine oracles, which related to that worship; yet he might

not wholly confine divine inspiration to that nation, but might support the law and religion of nature and the right worship of himself, as the one true God, among the Heathens likewise, by the help of these oracles, until *the day dawned*, i. e. a more perfect revelation came, and *he who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, gave the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*



(From the Connecticut Evangelical Magazine.)



On God's making his own glory his last end.

THE term *glory*, as it relates to the Most High, is sometimes used, in the holy scriptures, to denote the *inherent excellency of the divine nature*; at others, the *respect and honor* due to his holy name. In the former sense it appears to have been used by Moses, when he besought the Lord to shew him his glory: For, the answer was, "I will cause all my *goodness* to pass before thee—and the Lord passed by before him and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious."—In the latter, by God himself, when he says, "I am the Lord; that is my name, and my *glory* will I not give unto another." When the *glory* of God is spoken of as an end for which he may be supposed to act, it means, either the *intrinsic excellency* of his own nature, or the *manifestations* of it—either that, which constitutes the real worth and beauty of the divine character; or, a display of it, in its genuine fruits. The former is usually termed the *inherent glory* of God; the latter, his *declarative*.

The *inherent* glory of God, as the term respects his moral character, consists in the affection or disposition of his infinite eternal mind; the *declarative*, in the visible, external manifestations of this affection, or disposition. What the inherent glory of God is, consisting in the moral disposition of his eternal mind, the holy scriptures very clearly teach us: The

apostle John tells us, that God is Love. The same is implied in the name, by which God proclaimed himself before Moses. This constitutes the whole moral nature of the ever blessed God. The divine, eternal mind is wholly made up of goodness and love. The moral character of the infinite God is all made up of love. The Lord exists to do good—For purposes of goodness it is, that he reigns.

This being the excellent nature and disposition of the divine mind, it must be that his highest delight is in doing good. God's own enjoyment and happiness must be, in producing and diffusing happiness. *He* enjoys the good which he does; and enjoys it to an infinitely higher degree, than his creatures, who receive it. A disposition to do good, rejoices in the good which is done. As love seeks, so it enjoys the happiness of others. It is, therefore, the glory of God to do good—to do excellent things. In this way God seeks his own glory—In this way glorifies himself. This was his motive to create: The same influences in his whole government of the world.

For God to make his own glory his last and highest end, is no other, therefore, than to exercise an infinitely strong disposition to do good; and, to be primarily and principally influenced by it, in the whole of his works and administration. In no other light can the divine character appear so excellent, so lovely and glorious. For God to make his own glory his highest end, naturally and necessarily comprises the greatest good and highest felicity of his moral kingdom. In his making this his highest end, his own happiness and that of his creatures are united—they are so united, that they cannot be separated from each other. God accomplishes his end only in the production of a good, which will satisfy his own infinite good will. In this way he is glorified, and will be glorified forever.

If these observations are just, and this be the sense, in which God makes his own glory his last end, it will follow.

1. That it is *a most desirable thing* that God should make his own glory his great and ultimate end. This implies, that the highest felicity of the infinite Being himself is in doing good. Were not the disposition of the divine mind such, that his chief and highest delight is in doing good, what reason have we to suppose, that his laws would be holy, just and good? And what certain evidence could we have, that his government is, or will be wisely administered? Were not this the divine moral character—were not this the disposition of the Eternal Mind, what reason could we have to rejoice that the Lord reigns? But that a Being, whose love and good will are absolutely infinite, should make his own glory his highest and last end, represents his character in the most excellent light, and renders him an object worthy of the supreme and highest love of his creatures. There is no other or higher end, for which it can be desirable, that the holy God should act. In what can it be desired, that the great God should more delight, than in doing good—in diffusing happiness? When we consider what the moral character of the divine Being really is, as represented in the holy scriptures, we evidently detract from it, by supposing him to be influenced, in his wonderful and excellent works, by any other, or lower end, than his own glory.

2. God's making his own glory his last and highest end, is the fullest and only security for the best and highest good of the created system. Here, and here only, we find evidence, that a good will take place adequate to the purposes of infinite love and good will—a created holiness and happiness, in which God himself will rest satisfied—which will satisfy the infinitely strong desires of divine, unbounded love. We accordingly find it promised to Christ, that he should see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied. Could that love, that travail of soul, which brought the Lord of glory into our world, and to the cross, be satisfied with a good—with a created felicity, which might have been exceeded? If infinite power and wisdom and love fail of producing such measures

of created holiness and created happiness, as cannot be exceeded; the great and glorious God fails, for aught we can see, of accomplishing his last and highest end. And, failing of this, how can he rest satisfied in his works, and enjoy complete and infinite felicity?

3. As God makes his own glory his last and highest end, it is most desirable, that he should be an absolute sovereign. The sovereignty of God principally intends his being influenced to acts of goodness purely by the inherent goodness of his own glorious nature, taking his motives wholly from within himself, his own wisdom alone adopting and directing the measures for accomplishing the purposes of his love. Were it not that the glorious God is this absolute sovereign, where would it have been possible for him to find a motive for saving sinners! Where, but in his own infinite good will, could there have been a motive for God's being manifest in flesh—for Christ's dying, and himself becoming a curse! Had not the holy God been moved to give his only begotten Son—had not the glorious Redeemer been influenced to that humiliating and painful work, which lays the only foundation for the recovery of sinners, purely by the inherent, infinite good will and love of the divine nature itself; the work of redemption never would, or could have been accomplished: Nor could sinners of mankind ever have been saved. And, whatever disposition might have existed in any one for the salvation of sinners, had not God's wisdom alone devised the plan, and chosen and directed the measures for its accomplishment we must all, infallibly have perished forever. It is infinitely best, that the unerring wisdom of God should alone direct the measures for accomplishing such good, as his own infinite love alone can incline him to accomplish. What can be more desirable, than that *such a being as the Lord is* should be an absolute sovereign! Considering the moral character, and the infinite perfection of God, what more precious doctrine, than that of his absolute sovereignty! Who, that is a friend to the greatest good, can understandingly be an enemy to it!

4. It is easy to see that, had there not been such fallen, sinful creatures as we are, there would have been no opportunity for a discovery of such infinite strength of divine love and good will, as evidently appear in the recovery and salvation of sinners.—Creatures would have had no advantage to see, that the divine Being possesses such treasures of good will, as to be influenced to such wonders of goodness—ininitely undeserved goodness, by nothing but the mere infinite benevolence of his own heart! That glorious sovereignty, which implies self-moving infinite goodness—a disposition to do good, for the pleasure of doing it—doing the greatest possible and the most undeserved good, for the sake of the delight there is in doing it, never could have been seen in its glory, had there not been such infinitely unworthy and ill deserving objects as we are, toward whom it may be displayed, and on whom it may operate.

5. If God's own glory be his last and highest end, and if his *goodness* in his glory, it might reasonably be expected, that he make some monuments of his just and everlasting displeasure. Should the infinitely good God make no distinctions among mankind, having mercy on whom he will have mercy: how apt would creatures be to suggest, that there were other motives for the good which he does to sinners, than those by which he designs to make it appear he is solely influenced—other reasons, than the supreme delight, which the infinite God has in doing good! Without such a distinction, how could that glorious sovereignty, which is the highest evidence of infinite incomprehensible love, ever have been seen and enjoyed!

God is so ordering things, and will forever so dispose them, as to exhibit the brightest evidence, that he is goodness itself, pure infinite goodness and love. This is God's great end—This is to act for his own glory—This is his wise and glorious sovereignty. And what abundant reason have all creatures to rejoice, that God makes his own glory his last end—That *such a Being* is a sovereign and will glorify himself—his

own great and excellent name!—To rejoice in a glory and sovereignty to do good—the most and greatest good? Infinitely greater will be the felicity of his moral kingdom, for these glorious attributes, for ever and ever.

What a beautiful and blessed harmony is there in the doctrines of the word of God! How are they all fitted to make the most lively impressions, and give the most exalted views of the transcendent and incomprehensible excellency of the moral character of the glorious God! No one but he, who possesses, could have drawn and exhibited such a character; a character so infinitely friendly to the greatest good of the universe; and, which so certainly and perfectly secures it! In contending with those doctrines, which represent the Lord as an absolute sovereign, ever acting for his own glory, why is it not evident, not only that we oppose our own greatest and best good, but that we are enemies to God's highest and most excellent felicity and the greatest good of the moral system!

ANECDOTE.

Of the efficacy of Prayer.

THE parents of the late Rev Dr. *Samuel Finley*, were eminently pious. They had seven sons, and one daughter. It was their practice, soon after the birth of each child, to set apart a day to be spent in prayer to God, and intercession on behalf of the child, that it might be a subject of divine grace, and an heir of eternal life. Their prayers appear to have ascended, like *Cornelius's*, as a memorial before God; and the parents had the pleasure to see their children distinguished for their piety even in their youth, and growing in grace as the number of their years increased. Most of them lived to an advanced age; were useful in their several spheres; and greatly respected and beloved on account of the eminence of their Christian character.

RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCE.

Extract of a letter from the Rev. Ebenezer Grant, dated Bedford, State of New York, June 30th. 1806.

“WEEK before last, I went to supply the congregation at Pleasant Valley, about seven miles back from Poughkeepsie, one of the principal towns on the Hudson. In this congregation there is and has been for some time, I think since the first of January, a very considerable revival in religion, which seemed to begin and to be cherished by meetings for prayer, in the different quarters of this society, in their destitute state. Frequently at these meetings, persons under exercise of soul would involuntarily fall and experience a temporary suspension of bodily action, and in most instances when they recovered appeared deeply affected with the things of religion: some rejoicing in the hope of the gospel, and some sorrowing in darkness and agonising doubts and fears. For three or four months past the bodily exercise has decreased, and scarcely now appears; but the revival still continues. I was with them seven days, and preached nine times, administered the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper. A number of adults and children were baptized, and thirty-four admitted for the first time, most of them between fifteen and twenty eight years old. I spent a good part of the day on Saturday in examining them in the church, and scarcely ever remember to have passed a more pleasant day. Their relations, exercises and answers to my questions, indicated such a solemnity, tenderness, sense of sin; such a good hope in God through our Lord Jesus

Christ, such desires and purposes to forsake sin, and cleave to the love and service of God with purpose of heart, as encouraged me to believe and trust that the work was the Lord's, and no counterfeit.— This is remarkable, that not one gave the bodily operations as any cause of hope, or evidence of conversion, and I strove to inculcate the idea universally, that such appearances might sometimes accompany a work of grace, but were not necessary, or true signs of a work of grace to be rested in, and this seemed to accord with their ideas.”

Assembly's Magazine.

It is peculiarly pleasing to see with what rapidity congregations are forming, churches organizing, and the gospel spreading, in the northern parts of this state. For though we have great cause to lament our misimprovement of the inestimable privileges which we enjoy, and want of zeal in the service of our Lord and master; yet there is much reason to rejoice that the interest of religion is gradually progressing, and the boundaries of the Redeemer's kingdom enlarging around us. The torrent of immorality and vice, which but a little while ago, was sweeping all before it, is arrested in its mad career; and the public morals and public sentiment are very much corrected and meliorated, under the benign influence of the gospel. In several places there has been a serious attention to religion, and considerable additions have been made to the church, of those who were hopeful trophies of redeeming love. Although that religious ardour has much abated, yet its happy effects

are still visible, in the regular lives and unshaken attachment of the subjects of it, to the ordinances and institutions of religion.

Encouraged by these animating prospects, we humbly look up to the great head of the church, to carry on his own work with power, "until his dominion shall extend from sea even to sea, and from the rivers unto the ends of the earth." (*Northern Observer.*

New-York, July 22, 1806.

We are favoured with the following letter from *Capt. Benjamin Wickes*, dated London April 2d, 1806, which has lately been received by his friends in this place.

Assen. Mag.

I WROTE you a few days after my arrival at this place, and gave you I think some general account of what had happened to me since I saw you; but as I do not remember particulars, perhaps I may in this repeat some things I have already mentioned. We are going from London to Calcutta; two missionaries with their wives are going with us from the baptist society, and a young woman espoused to a missionary already in Bengal from the London society, and there to be married. On the 12th of last month, the baptist missionaries were ordained at Oxford, and set apart for the mission at Bengal. I went to Oxford on this occasion, and was witness of a very solemn scene, and was treated with all that tenderness, that would have been due to an eminently good and useful man. Alas! for us, how easy is it for man to be mistaken! These people went so far in a full meeting of their missionary society to vote me their thanks for the part I had acted in favour

of their mission, and requested that I would set for their limner in London, to take my likeness, to be deposited among the most noted of those that have been, are now, and may hereafter be, engaged in this work. This has been done and whatever may be the consequence, I take it as I think it is meant, an expression of gratitude to a stranger, who has given some proofs of favouring their cause. On my return to London I found that the Lord had blessed the ministry of the Jew minister and given him several seals to his ministry from among his brethren. One evening last week, I went with one of the missionaries that is going with me, with two or three others, to drink tea with the Jew minister. While we were at tea there came in two Jews that were awakened under that sermon which you heard me speak of hearing him preach last fall, which was the first fruits of his labours. Those took tea with us, and after tea was over, there came in three other Jews the fruits of his ministry. When they had sat down I counted our number, and found there were an equal number of both Jews and gentiles, six of each, on which I observed that there was a remarkable instance before our eyes, of the partition wall, between the Jews and gentiles being broken down, and proposed, that we should join together in prayer, and praise, which was readily agreed to, although the Jews had not heretofore seen such a thing, and perhaps such a thing had not taken place since the time of the Apostles, if then. I lead in the exercise, the missionary followed, and the Jew minister concluded. When the exercise was over, the Jews took us by our hands with such ex-

pressions of love and brotherly affection as was truly gratifying. The evening before last, I went to take tea with the missionaries at their lodgings, where I found a large company of christian people of different denominations assembled. Mr. Fuller, Sutcliff, and several other ministers, were among them also the Jew minister, and several of his Jew converts, the way being opened last week as mentioned above, for their mixing with the Gentiles. Here we held a very solemn exercise in prayer and praise. I was again appointed to lead, a missionary of the London society followed, the Jew minister succeeded, and Fuller and Sutcliff concluded. When the exercise was over, the Jews were again taken by the hand, by both ministers and people, and received in the bonds of brotherly love, as alive from the dead. Yesterday morning I had on board the ship to breakfast, the missionaries and their wives, several ministers of different denominations, and others to the number of about thirty. I would fain have had the Jews among them, but they could not come. Here we had an exercise of prayer and praise, until near twelve o'clock, committing the missionaries, the ship and the crew, to the care of the blessed God, and praying for the spread of the gospel among the heathen. In the evening there was a meeting held at one of the baptist meeting houses, for the purpose of dismissing the missionaries from their country and kindred, to go among the heathen in Bengal. This was a crowded and solemn assembly. After two ministers had prayed, Mr. Fuller gave a word of exhortation and advice to the mission-

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aries, that was truly affecting and impressive. Now what shall we say to these things, cannot we conclude that God is really with us, and take the comfort of it?

BENJAMIN WICKES, Sen.

MISSION IN INDIA.

THE Rev. Charles Buchanan, A. M. Vice Provost of the college of Fort William, has lately published a memoir concerning ecclesiastical establishments in India, which contains much curious and valuable information. The subject is no less than that of giving christianity, and with it civilization, to myriads of human beings, now sunk in the grossest ignorance, and abased by the most atrocious superstitions. For the promotion of this object, Mr. B. divides his tract into three principal parts: the first relates to the care and preservation of the christian faith among his own countrymen settled in India; the second treats of the practicability of civilizing and converting the natives; and the third states the progress already made in that civilization, and in the planting of Christianity. Under each of these heads is contained many articles which deserve the attention of every person anxious to promote the progress of the Redeemer's kingdom; and which furnish motives for encouragement for missionary men to proceed in their labours.

The following facts are stated in the dedication:

"New sources of information on all Oriental subjects, have been opened by the College of Fort William in Bengal. Those persons who have held official situations in that institution during the last four years, have had constant

opportunities of observing the conduct, and of learning the opinions, of the most intelligent natives. There are attached to the college, at this time, upwards of one hundred learned men, who have arrived from different parts of India, Persia, and Arabia. In such an assemblage, the manners and customs of remote regions are distinctly described; and their varying sentiments, religious and political, may be accurately investigated and compared.

“Of the learned Hindoos who have been employed as teachers, there were lately two from the Decan, who profess the Christian faith; and comport themselves according to Christian manners. Two Protestant missionaries have also been attached to the institution; one of whom is lecturer in the Bengalee and Sanscrit department; and has been for many years employed in preaching in the Bengalee language to the natives in the North of Hindoostan. The other is a teacher of the Tamul or Malabar language; and has been long attached to a mission in the south of the Peninsula.

“More desirable means of obtaining accurate and original intelligence could not have been presented to any one, who wished to investigate the state of the natives of India, with a view to their moral and religious improvement.”

“Under the auspices of Marquis Wellesley, who, by favor of Providence, now presides in the government of India, a version of the holy Scriptures may be expected, not in one language alone, but in seven of the Oriental tongues; in the Hindoostanee, Persian, Chinese, and Malay; Orissa, Mah-

ratta, and Bengalese; of which the four former are the primary and popular languages of the Continent and Isles of Asia.

“In the centre of the Pagan world, and at the chief seat of superstition and idolatry, these works are carried on; and the unconverted natives assist in the translations. The gospels have already been translated into the Persian, Hindoostanee, Mahratta, Orissa, and Malay languages; and the whole Scriptures have been translated into the Bengalee language. One edition of the Bengalee Bible has been distributed among the natives; and a second is in the press for their use. A version of the Scriptures in the Chinese language (the language of three hundred millions of men) has also been undertaken; and a portion of the work is already printed off.”

The second division of this memoir treating of the practicability of civilizing and christianizing the natives of Hindoostan, will be read with increasing interest.—The following are some of his observations on this subject.

“To civilize the Hindoos will be considered, by most men, our duty; but is it practicable? and if practicable, would it be consistent with a wise policy? It has been alleged by some, that no direct means ought to be used for the moral improvement of the natives; and it is not considered liberal or politic to disturb their superstitions.

“Whether we use direct means or not, their superstitions will be *disturbed* under the influence of British civilization. But we ought first to observe that there are multitudes who have no faith at all. Neither Hindoos nor Mussulmans,

out casts from every faith; they are of themselves fit objects for our beneficence. Subjects of the British empire, they seek a cast and a religion, and claim from a just government the franchise of a human creature.

“And as to those who have a faith, that faith, we aver, will be disturbed, whether we wish it or not, under the influence of British principles: this is a truth confirmed by experience. Their prejudices weaken daily in every European settlement. Their sanguinary rites cannot now bear the noonday of English observation: and the intelligent among them are ashamed to confess the absurd principles of their own casts. As for extreme delicacy towards the superstitions of the Hindoos, they understand it not. Their ignorance and apathy are so extreme, that no means of instruction will give them serious offence, except positive violence*.”

“The moral state of the Hindoos is represented as being still worse than that of the Mahome-

tans. Those who have had the best opportunities of knowing them, and who have known them for the longest time, concur in declaring that neither truth, nor honesty, honour, gratitude, nor charity, is to be found pure in the breast of a Hindoo. How can it be otherwise? The Hindoo children have no moral instruction. If the inhabitants of the British isles had no moral instruction, would they be moral? The Hindoos have no moral books. What branch of their mythology has not more of falshood and vice in it, than of truth and virtue? They have no moral gods. The robber and the prostitute lift up their hands with the infant and the priests, before an horrible idol of clay painted red, deformed and disgusting as the vices which are practised before it†.

“You will sometimes hear it said that the Hindoos are a mild and passive people. They have apathy rather than mildness; their hebetude of mind is, perhaps, their chief negative virtue. They are a

“The Christian missionary is always followed by crowds of the common people, who listen with great pleasure to the disputation between him and the Brahmins; and are not a little amused when the Brahmins depart, and appoint another day for the discussion. The people sometimes bring back the Brahmins by constraint, and urge them to the contest again.”

† “The Hindoo superstition has been denominated *lascivious* and *bloody*. That it is bloody, is manifest from the daily instances of the female sacrifice, and of the commission of sanguinary or painful rites. The ground of the former epithet may be discovered in the description of their religious ceremonies: ‘There is in most sects a right-handed or decent path: and a left handed or *indecent* mode of worship.’”

“See Essay on the Religious Ceremonies of the Brahmins, by H. T. Colebrooke, Esq. *Asiat. Res.* vol. vii. p. 281. That such a principle should have been admitted as systematic into any religion on earth, may be considered as the last effort of mental depravity in the invention of a superstition to blind the understanding, and to corrupt the heart.

race of men of weak bodily frame, and they have a mind conformed to it, timid and abject in the extreme. They are passive enough to receive any vicious impression. The English government found it necessary lately to enact a law against parents sacrificing their own children. In the course of the last six months, one hundred and sixteen women were burnt alive with the bodies of their deceased husbands within thirty miles round Calcutta the most civilized quarter of Bengal.* But, independently of their superstitious practices, they are described by competent judges as being of a spirit vindictive and merciless; exhibiting it-

self at times in a rage and infatuation, which is without example among any other people. †

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*Extracts of letters from Mr. Carey to a Friend in Edinburgh.*

Sept. 27 1804.

THE means afforded of spreading gospel light, by dispersing the word of God and pamphlets, have been great, and the exertions of our friends very generous; and though the light struck up be but as a spark, it has glanced upon very many. Yet, from a calculation made a few days ago, it ap-

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 • “ From April to October, 1804.

† “ Lord Teignmouth, while President of the Asiatic Society in Bengal, delivered a discourse, in which he illustrated the revengeful and pitiless spirit of the Hindoos, by instances which had come within his own knowledge while resident at Benares.

“ In 1791, Soodishter Meer, a Bramin, having refused to obey a summons issued by a civil officer, a force was sent to compel obedience. To intimidate them, or to satiate a spirit of revenge in himself, he sacrificed one of his own family. On their approaching his house, he cut off the head of his deceased son's widow and threw it out.

“ In 1793, a Brahmin, named Balloo, had a quarrel with a man about a field, and by way of revenging himself on this man, he killed his own daughter. ‘ I became angry, said he, and enraged at his forbidding me to plough the field, and bringing my own little daughter Apmunya, who was only a year and a half old, I killed her with my sword.’

“ About the same time, an act of matricide was perpetrated by two Bramins, Beechuk and Adher. These two men conceiving themselves to have been injured by some persons in a certain village, they brought their mother to an adjacent rivulet, and calling aloud to the people of the village, ‘ Becchuk drew his scymetar, and, at one stroke, severed his mother's head from the body; with the professed view, as avowed both by parent and son, that the mother's spirit might forever haunt those who had injured them.’ *Asiat. Res. vol. iv. p. 337.*

pears that it will require the expenditure of a sum not less than 250,000*l.* sterling, to furnish every *twelfth* person in Bengal with a New Testament, at the cheapest rate that we can print them: What then must we say of the whole of Hindoostan and the surrounding countries? The prospect on one side almost sinks our hopes; but the promise and faithfulness of God encourages us to go on.—“The earth must be filled with the knowledge of the Lord.” This knowledge must be conveyed by the word of his grace, published and preached. Compared with the greatness of the work, the means are but small; and, perhaps, *three fourths* of those means which God has committed to his church are withheld, by the influence of custom, preconceived opinions of church government, timidity, conformity to the world, luxury, covetousness, or other evils; perhaps few feel as they ought, the sin of not devoting ALL their talents, influence, and substance to the Lord.

8th Feb. 1805.

The second edition of the New Testament is getting forward.—We skipped over Luke, Acts, and Romans, intending to print ten thousand copies of these three books to give away, where a whole New Testament might be improper. We are now in the first epistle to the Thessalonians; and of the ten thousand, Luke is nearly finished. The ten first chapters of Matthew are printed in Mahratta, at Dr. Hunter's press; Matthew, and part of Mark, in Hindoostanee; and the third volume of the Old Testament, Job and the second edition

of the Psalms to Psalm 136, are printed. The New Testament is nearly all translated into Mahratta and Oareea; and a gentleman is translating the New Testament into Malay.

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*Extract of a letter from Mrs. Marshman, Wife of one of the Missionaries.*

“As it is the desire of our brethren to spread the gospel as widely as possible, they mean, as often as any brother can be spared from home, to place him out, after he has learned the language, at the distance of fifty or a hundred miles; putting him at the same time into a little way of business, whereby he may employ a number of the natives, and at the same time make known to them something of the blessed way of life. Thus brother Chamberlain is stationed at Cutwa, about a hundred miles up the river. We bought him a piece of ground, built him a bungalow, and put him into the cloth way. He employs a number of weavers, gives them a little money in hand; they find every thing, and make the cloth at their own houses; when done they bring it home, and receive the rest of the money; with which we supply him from Serampore.

“My first business in the morning is to see that the children (forty or forty five in number) are bathed and dressed fit for the day. At seven, the writing-school commences; at eight, worship and breakfast; at nine, school begins again, and continues till the bell rings for dinner, at half past one; at three, school again, which ends at half past five; and by the time every thing is put in order

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tea is ready; and after tea, worship immediately. By the time all is over, and the children are in bed, it is generally nine o'clock; after which time is my holy-day, to read, write, or work. But I am often so overcome with fatigue, and the scorching heat of

the day, that I feel neither will nor power to do any thing at all; and when I sit down to converse with you, it is with a weary body, a stupid soul, and dim eyes.— But I am sure of having all my faults lightly passed over, and all covered with love.”

Evan. Mag.

~~~~~  
ORIGINAL POETRY.

*The works of Creation, the Law, and the Gospel.*

1. **THE** works declare thee, Lord,  
Most mighty, wise and good;  
Fields, floods, and skies from age to age  
Thy witnesses have stood.
2. Thy perfect righteousness  
Is by thy law made known;  
Sinai with awful voice proclaims  
How holy is thy throne.
3. Yet, Lord, thy gospel shines  
With brighter, gentler rays;  
For sinners here thy mercy learn,  
And taste thy pard'ning grace.
4. Thy law reveals our guilt  
But no deliv'rance shews;  
Nor can creation's stores afford  
A balm to heal our woes.
5. But when we see thy Son  
Expiring for our sins,  
We feel new life and peace and joy,  
And heav'n on earth begins.
6. We bless the wondrous work  
Of wisdom, truth and love:  
Thy gospel which sustains us now  
Shall be our song above.

ASPASIO.

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*Monumental Inscriptions.*

## I.

THE sting of ghastly death is sin,  
 The law gives sin its pow'r:  
 A soul expos'd to wrath divine  
 Must dread a dying hour.  
 But thanks to God who reigns on high,  
 His mercy be ador'd,  
 Who grants to us the victory  
 Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

## II.

O death, where is thy sting?  
 Grave, where's thy victory?  
 All praise to Christ my King,  
 I conquer though I die.  
 And soon my sleeping dust shall rise  
 To reign with him above the skies.

## III.

Through death's dark door all soon must go  
 To endless joy or endless woe:  
 Pause, reader, ask thyself, am I  
 Prepar'd should I be called to die?

## IV.

Fix'd on the Saviour's love and pow'r  
 Faith triumphs in a dying hour:  
 The soul escap'd from shades of night  
 Needs faith no more, but lives by sight.

## V.

The man whose hopes are plac'd on high  
 Fears not to see his end arrive:  
 Reader, if thou like him wouldst die,  
 Resolve betimes like him to live.

ASPASIO.

*Errata.*

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|------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
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| denuncinations, read denunciations | 16th.     | —.        |
| felm, read film,                   | 8th.      | 111.      |
| massacree, read massacre,          | 15th.     | 112.      |
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